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NATIONAL PARENT-TEACHER

The Only Official Magazine of the National  
Congress of Parents and Teachers

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\$1.00 a year—U. S. and Poss.              Single Copy  
1.25 a year—Canada                      15 cents  
1.50 a year—Foreign

Notice of change of address should be sent direct  
to the subscription office; old address in full as  
well as new address must be given.

The NATIONAL PARENT-TEACHER is listed  
in the Education Index.

Published monthly October to May, bi-monthly  
June to September, by the CHILD WELFARE  
COMPANY, INC.

Entered as Second-Class Matter at the Post Office,  
Washington, D. C., under Act of March 3, 1879

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# National Parent-Teacher

(Title Registered U. S. Patent Office)

VOL. XXXIII

No. 7



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1939

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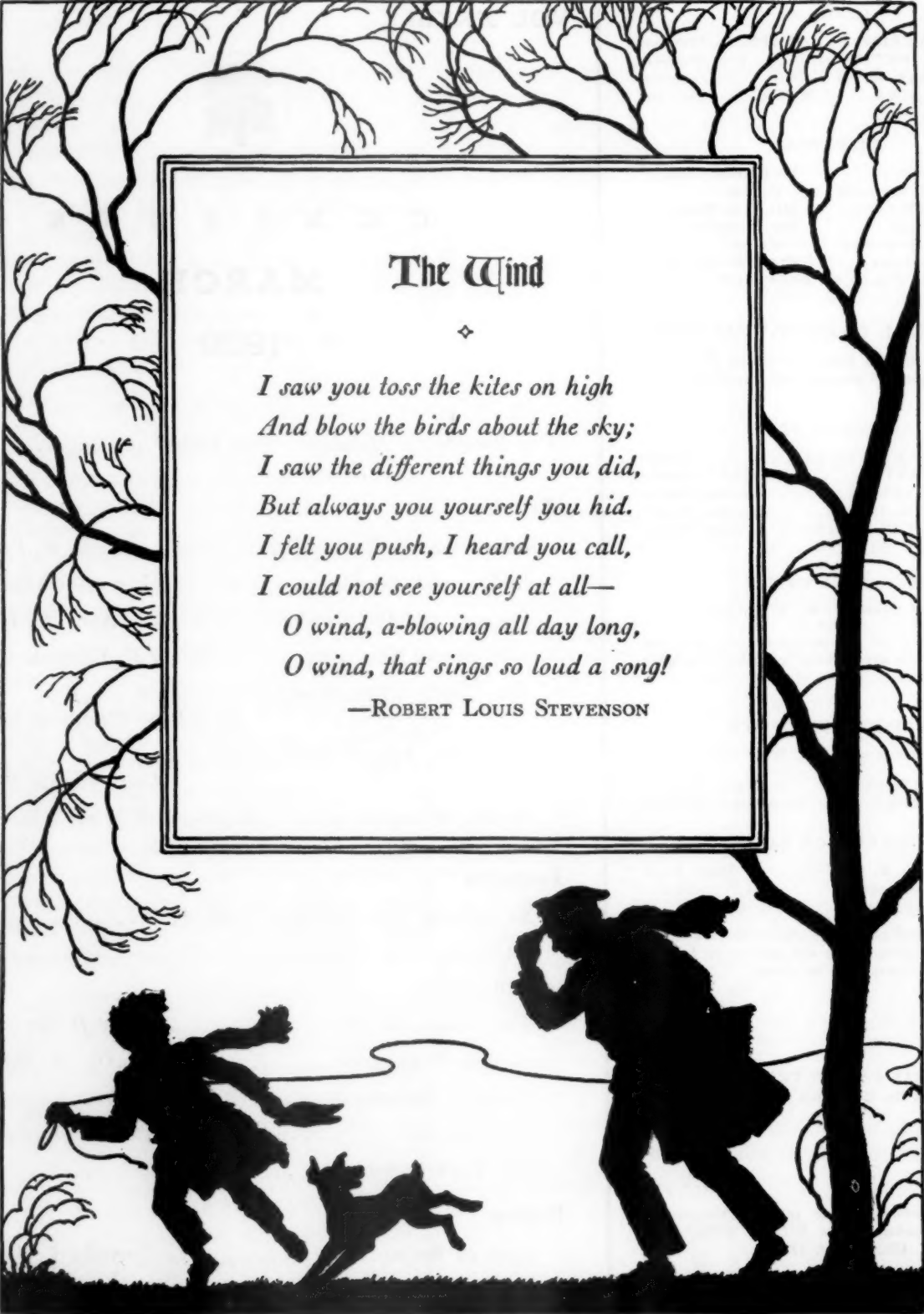
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## The Wind



*I saw you toss the kites on high  
And blow the birds about the sky;  
I saw the different things you did,  
But always you yourself you hid.  
I felt you push, I heard you call,  
I could not see yourself at all—  
O wind, a-blowing all day long,  
O wind, that sings so loud a song!*

—ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON



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# The President's Message



## "Just Folks"

**T**HE most precious thing in all life is people. Not only family and friends and relatives who are close to our daily living, but those others who are known to us only for fleeting moments or who merely pass in the distance.

Something in the hurried, tense life of today seems to be depriving us of those brief and lovely bits of human life about us. Perhaps we ourselves are to blame for this. We have fallen into the habit of classifying, tagging and labeling people. And thereby we have erected barriers like blank walls through which we cannot see and behind which we cannot go.

We say "Family-on-Relief," "Exceptional Child," "Employer and Employee." The very words close our eyes to human individualities: A normal family group where life ebbs and flows with birthdays and dishes to be done on Sunday by the children and Dad, and due-dates on library books to be noted and remembered. . . . A little child whose quick eyes are his protection as he skips along a little uncertainly in a world that is silence to his ears; or that other exceptional child, the gifted one, whose mind has set him somewhat apart from his fellows but who lingers wistfully on the fringe of some happy group busy with the simple and noisy games that "just kids" love to play.

Sometimes when we have placed a label upon the man whose small factory affects the destiny of our town, or upon the woman whose shop we patronize, we lose something of value; we do not clearly see the man and the woman, anxious and concerned, endeavoring to understand and to meet fairly and wisely the problems of their employees who like themselves are caught in the intricate web of our economic life.

**B**UT OF ALL OUR tags and labels none have more completely obscured our keen vision and blinded us to reality than have the phrases which we have grouped around the word Youth: "Unemployed Youth," "Underprivileged Youth," "Problem Youth," "Youth out of School." In the days immediately before us we must tear down the screens and barriers created by these words. We must see and know intimately what is behind them. We must see youth clearly—our boys and girls who long to be happy, to go places, to feel and experience life; who want to work at tasks they love, and play with those they love, and some day become the parents of children they will love; who want a part in making over this world along lines of their own adventurous thinking and who dream of rendering their service to humanity.

All these classifications indicate the mechanics and techniques with which we endeavor to meet today's problems. But let us remember that back of these words are people—real human beings. Who are they? They are acquaintances, friends, neighbors. They are our children.

*Frances S. Pettengill*

President,  
National Congress of Parents and Teachers

## *Concerning This Issue*

**T**HE history of civilization is, in a sense, the history of human relationships. For centuries untold, human relationships have been the subject of thought and speculation; it remained for the past century, however, to develop the universal study of human relationships. Today this study boasts a great and growing literature.

This study covers a large and varied field. It deals with parent-parent relationships, with parent-child relationships, with relationships of children in the same family; it involves the relationships between friends and neighbors; it includes the relationships of the individual to members of the community, the state, and society. There is no end to the possible classification. Yet in all these relationships there exist certain basic qualities—human sympathies—which may render life a joyful, cooperative, and satisfying adventure.

This issue opens with a general review of human relationships. It continues with discussions of particular relationships—relationships which are inevitable, existing between members of the family group; relationships which grow out of the contacts of daily living in school, on the playground, in the community; relationships which are involved in living together purposefully as members of a group devoted to the service of their fellow men.

It is the problem of this generation and tomorrow's to seek and secure more and more truth concerning human relationships. And, having secured this truth, to build a world in which man truly lives in peace and harmony with his family, his neighbors, his friends, his fellow men the world around.



# Education for Human Relationships

By JOSEPH K. FOLSOM

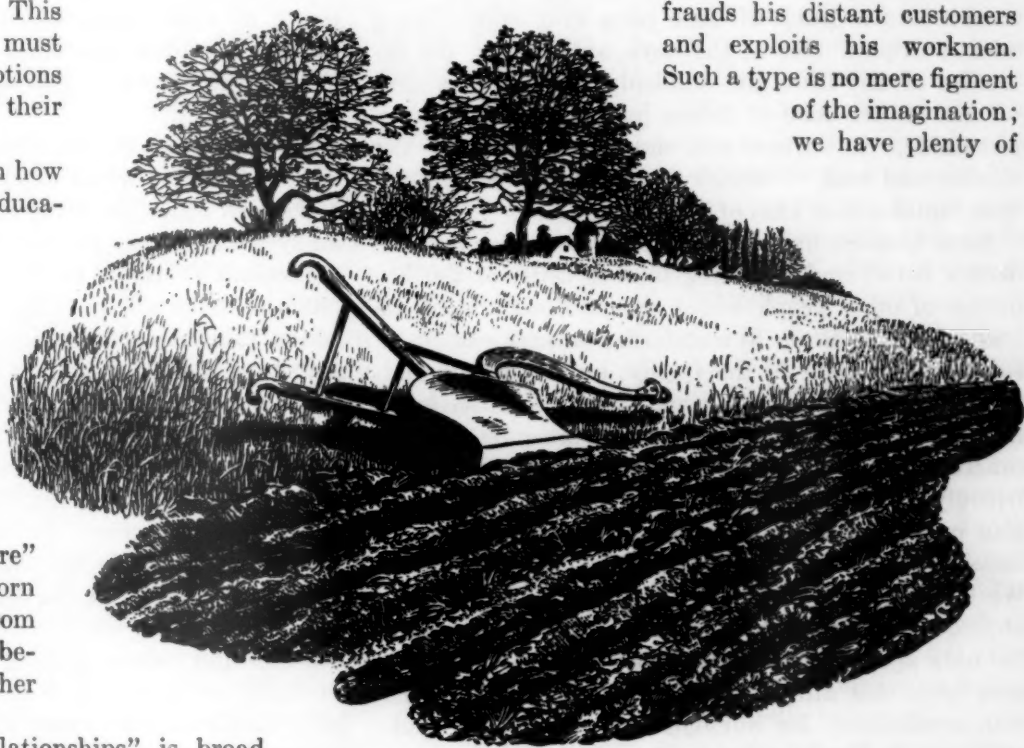
**N**OT so long ago, when education was beginning to wake up from its long slumber, some progressive school men used to say facetiously that "the schools exist to train but not to strain the minds of their students." Moreover, as Dr. Carr and Dr. Stoddard have previously shown in these pages, the schools exist not only to train the mind in the narrow sense, but to train the whole personality. This means that the schools must be concerned with the emotions as well as the thinking of their students.

Dr. Stoddard has shown how this new conception of education applies to the individual as a unit in himself. However, no individual, except an occasional hermit, lives in a social vacuum. One must learn to live with other human beings in order to achieve his own self-realization; even "human nature" itself is not mainly inborn but largely built up from the daily give-and-take between the child and other persons.

The term "human relationships" is broad enough to cover all of the four objectives of education which were set forth by Dr. Carr. In practice, however, we use the term to mean everyday relations with people we know personally. The sociologist calls these "face-to-face relations." He speaks of the face-to-face or primary group as distinguished from the large secondary group in which the members may not know one another or even see one another. The family is a primary group. So is the class in the schoolroom, the Boy Scout troop, the club, and the small circle of friends or neighbors who know one another. On the other hand, cities, nations, occupational groups, political parties, and religious denominations are secondary groups. They consist of people bound together by common interests but scattered over a wide area. The individual's relations to his occupation or profession will be discussed under "economic efficiency";

his relations with the larger community beyond his own personal acquaintance, and with his country and the world, will be discussed under "civic responsibility."

Training for all these fields of life is necessary to make the well-developed personality. We have all heard of the man who is so good to his family and is such a pillar of his church but defrauds his distant customers and exploits his workmen. Such a type is no mere figment of the imagination; we have plenty of



them in American life. But we also have the type of man who votes progressively and espouses great social and civic causes, yet neglects his own family and is mean to his neighbors or servants. We want to develop the kind of person who is humane and socially conscientious in all his relations.

The most important and universal of the face-to-face groups is the family. We all experience family relations at some time or other in our lives, whatever other groups we may join or may not join.

Successful human relations are not merely in the child's future. It is true that we wish to prepare him for a happy marriage of his own. But he is right now a member of a family group and he needs first of all help in his relations with this present family. The more direct preparation for marriage should come in

highschool and college. In the elementary school it is important to emphasize the pupil's present family relations. It might be said that it is the duty of the family to train its children to live harmoniously and happily in the home. True; but the school can help the family to perform this task. In this epoch of confusion the family needs this help more than it has done in the past and, we hope, more than it will in the future.

**I**N THE SCHOOL the child has a chance to be somewhat detached and thus to think about family relations objectively. What should one do when one's parents are cross? What makes a parent sometimes cross? What are the differences between the home group and the school group? A fifteen-year-old boy in a progressive highschool was watching some smaller children play in the affiliated nursery school. A little girl had pushed herself into a group of little boys who were playing with mud pies. One of the boys, annoyed by the intrusion of this little girl, suddenly slapped a handful of mud on her head of golden hair. As she ran away screaming, the fifteen-year-old boy rushed to the teacher and said, "I cannot find anything in the book that explains that kind of behavior."

Some teachers have learned to give even young children a better understanding than is usual of the behavior of other people about them. Teachers can be trained, and held up to standards; parents cannot be so easily reached. In the family, on the playground, in the gang, and in the school itself, children learn human relations, as they always have done, by actually practising those relations. But whether these shall be friendly or hostile, constructive or destructive, intelligent or stupid, depends largely on the atmosphere of ideas and values which surrounds the learning process. We learn best by doing, *and by talking thoughtfully at frequent intervals about what we do.* The school is the only agency which is equipped to supply all children with this atmosphere of ideas and values and with opportunity for intelligent discussion and guidance of their human relationships.

A second stage of human relations comes when the adolescent becomes interested in the opposite sex and thinks more definitely of marriage. Most students of American life are agreed that our unrealistic romanticism is responsible for many mistaken marriages and family tragedies. It is difficult to reason with a young man or woman who is violently in love. The time to introduce the intelligence factor into the choice of mate is years beforehand. The behavior of young people in courtship is largely determined by the ideas which have already been put into their heads. Modern fiction and the movies put many unrealistic ideas about love into the heads of our children and adolescents. The school has an opportunity to counterbalance these by instilling more realistic ideas. It is not necessary to sacrifice romance. If we were trained from the beginning to think the right way about it, a marriage based

upon common interests and a thoughtful diagnosis of compatibility would seem as beautiful and romantic as one based upon sudden whims and fancies.

A third stage of human relations is married life. In the college and in the highschool we can give young people a much more useful and definite preparation for marriage than most of them now have. Many inquiries and surveys show that young people of today are consciously and eagerly looking forward to marriage. They are no longer reluctant to talk about it. In many colleges they have petitioned the faculty to give them courses of study in preparation for marriage. Preparation in advance is important, but it is not enough. More and more we shall find married people attending courses and consultation centers to help them solve their problems, or to construct an even more ideal married life. Extra-school agencies have provided many of these opportunities; but the school itself, through its adult education programs and otherwise, has a large opportunity in this sphere.

**A**N IMPORTANT ELEMENT in preparation for marriage is sex education, which needs to begin long before the highschool age. The home should do this, but a great many homes of the present day cannot or will not do it adequately. Hence in several forward-thinking communities the people have been willing, by some explicit action, to intrust their school authorities with this task, realizing that the children will get sex education anyway and might better get it from the school than from the street. In many other communities the school people have had to do the best they could in a confused situation full of conflicting attitudes, ostrich-like ignorance, and hypocrisy. Before adolescence the thing chiefly needed is facts, without emotional coloring, to allay curiosity. At the senior highschool level it is possible to discuss sex in a richer framework of human relations and values, guiding but not discouraging the student's emotions. It is well that sex teaching be integrated with other material, such as biology and the economic and social problems of marriage. There should be no "sex courses" as such.

Healthful attitudes toward sex, while a very important element in sound marriage, are not the whole of it. The study of human personality, based upon case studies taken from fiction and from real life, and the objective, thoughtful analysis of the give-and-take between persons, are important parts of a sound education. Some teachers of English have done this well. Elsewhere social science teachers, or home economists, have contributed usefully. That this element should be supplied in the school experience of every student is far more important than what name the study is called or what department has charge of it.

**T**HE STUDY AND PRACTICE of account-keeping and family budgeting is another important element in preparation for marriage. I for one do not believe that this is



a mere secondary detail which "will take care of itself if everything else is all right." While conflicts about money are often a symbol for something deeper, yet there are thousands of families today whose real basic trouble is money, and in which tragedy could have been averted if they had learned intelligent practice and reasonable attitudes about money years ago. Someone has said facetiously that it is not money but the lack of it that causes family difficulties. This statement is emphatically untrue. As many studies show, money problems arise at all economic levels. Family unhappiness and discord are prevalent, without great difference, among both the rich and the poor. It is not the amount of money but the management of it which causes the trouble.

A fourth stage of human relations is parenthood. Dr. Caroline Zachry, of the Progressive Education Association's Commission on Adolescents, has found that there is a genuine and increasing tendency among adolescents to look forward toward parenthood. They are interested in young children, and this is true even of the boys, especially among the more privileged groups. Less privileged young people also want children but express great anxiety concerning their economic future and their financial ability to raise families. Study of the details of child care seems not to be called for as a universal experience at the elementary or junior highschool levels.

There are, however, many girls and even boys who at the highschool age are ready for such experience as nursery school observation can give. Even at the younger ages it should be taught that the raising of children is an art abundantly enriched and improved by modern science, not based on a mere collection of old wives' tales and popular superstitions. Thus, attitudes and expectations should be built up which will lead young people to the sources of sound parent education in their communities whenever they feel ready for it. The school system in every city might provide such opportunities through nursery schools, and otherwise, for students at all levels from childhood to parenthood.

A fifth and heretofore neglected stage of human relations is that which comes to an adult after his children are grown and he must make certain readjustments in his interests and activities if the later years of his life are to be a rich experience. With women, of course, who often devote themselves exclu-

sively to their homes and children during the twenties and thirties, this need for a readjustment in the forties is especially marked. Dr. Lillian J. Martin, herself eighty-seven years of age, has set up in San Francisco a widely known clinic for the "salvaging of old age." This salvaging would be much easier if it began long before old age set in. One task of the schools is to give each student a sufficiently wide range of interests so that he will have a fund to draw upon not only in old age, but all through life whenever some emergency, such as unemployment or illness, upsets his customary manner of life. Adult education is also needed to replenish this fund of interests from time to time as life goes along.

One aspect of preparation for these more mature years of life is preparation for grandparenthood. The trouble with many older people today is that they still try to behave like parents instead of learning to be grandparents. Our customs have also gone to a needless extreme in separating older persons from their younger relatives. A thoughtful revaluation of our whole system of family living might modify somewhat our pet idea that "old folks cannot live happily with young folks," and pave the way toward somewhat larger and more secure family groups. In this matter, as in many others, the task of the schools should not be to teach some conclusion already arrived at, but rather

to stimulate the kind of democratic discussion through which the problem may eventually be solved.

Sixth and finally, about ten percent of persons of both sexes will never marry. The schools cannot afford to overlook these people in their programs of teaching human relations. While we are striving to improve marriage and parenthood and to encourage larger families among people physically and mentally fit, we must not allow any sense of inferiority to cast a shadow on the happiness and usefulness of those of our fellow citizens who, for one reason or another, may remain in single blessedness. They too will have human relationships; they will have their warm friendships; they will live in various groups; and many of them will be important members of family groups. The training which the schools give in human relationships should not imply that everyone must necessarily marry, but should be couched in such terms as to be of universal meaning.

Some people say that common sense is all that is

**THIS is the third of the series of articles based on *The Purposes of Education in American Democracy*, the book published by the Educational Policies Commission. "Education for Human Relationships" is concerned with the more intimate person-to-person contacts of the individual with his friends, his immediate neighbors, and the members of his own family group. These articles may be used as the basis for discussion by parents and teachers and every citizen who places human welfare at the summit of his scale of values.**

necessary for the attainment of the objectives we are here discussing. If that be true, an appalling number of people must lack common sense. I am reminded of a family in which one daughter was always being compared unfavorably with her older sister. This was done directly and frequently, in her hearing, by her parents in speaking to relatives and visitors. Is it possible that these otherwise intelligent persons could not have known what usually results from such treatment? To be sure, knowledge in the field of human relations is not so exact or far advanced as knowledge about physical things. Yet there are some elementary principles of human behavior which are as reliable as is the principle that a lighted match thrown into a kerosene-soaked barrel of waste paper is likely to produce a fire. Apparently many people either do not know these elementary principles, or while they know them abstractly are not able to apply them in actual life.

The reason why many people fail to apply common-sense knowledge in human relations is that they are dominated by their emotions—by some powerful urge, fear, or other motive which overrules such common sense as they may have. The problem of education, therefore, is not merely to give information but to remove some of these emotional barriers which prevent people from using their information. For example, some people have a feeling that they simply must express their feelings at the moment. To fail to do so seems to them a kind of dishonesty. Often they are just annoyed and have not learned any other way to manage this annoyance than to give vent to angry words. They are so busy expressing their own feelings that they do not observe what is happening to other people. One treatment for this difficulty is to train people, during their calmer moments, to observe the behavior of other people. How many people, for example, have learned consciously to watch the facial expressions and movements of another person while talking to him about some emotion-stirring subject? This is an exercise that might well be tried out in the schools. How many people try to imagine what it would feel like to be in someone else's shoes? It is through the cultivation of this kind of thinking that human sympathy may be deepened. The art of human relationship is based upon sympathy and insight.

A well-known psychologist once suggested that even before adolescence children could usefully learn to keep diaries in which they would discuss their own behavior objectively. Thus he imagines a twelve-year-old boy writing: "I am ganging up with several boys about my own age in the neighborhood, and not paying much attention to girls." This suggestion is not idle theory. I have actually talked with children who were

able to discuss their own behavior and that of others in such an objective way. We are apt to think of such a child as queer, but he is queer simply because it has not been the custom in our culture generally for children to keep diaries and to discuss behavior in these terms. It is the duty and the privilege of the schools to create new customs and to modify our culture where it sees an opportunity, by so doing, to improve human life.

Another emotional obstacle or prejudice which has stood in the way of intelligent management of human relations is a certain irrational fear of condoning wrong or coddling the wrongdoer. We are wont to say, "The trouble with him is not that he *can't* do it, but that he *won't*. Don't give him any more excuses to justify his weakness; what he lacks is not understanding, but strength of will." This is all very well, but how

are we going to give him this additional strength of will? One cannot raise oneself by one's moral bootstraps. There always has to be a "how," a method—aye a "technique," even if we do not like that word. A great psychiatrist once said that the greatest tragedy of his medical experience was to see how much people wanted to love each other and yet could not seem to do it.

**I**NDEED, the art of human relationships is something more than information; but it is also something more than mere strength of will or character. It requires insight into one's own feelings and those of others, an insight which can be developed only gradually, through the wide and free observation and discussion of human behavior in all sorts of situations. The school more than any other agency in our modern life has the opportunity to stimulate this observation and discussion, and to carry it on in an atmosphere which is free from the pressure of immediate demands. In such an atmosphere, habits of thoughtful observation and attitudes of sympathetic understanding may be developed.

About two thousand years ago a Great Teacher gave to the world a new idea of human relationships. To put this idea into a few words is difficult. It involves however at least this: The way to a better human life is the way of kindness and sympathy and understanding one's fellow men, rather than the way of self-assertion and hostility and struggle. Can it be, perhaps, that twentieth-century democratic education may be the first agency to find an effective way to implement this idea, to make it more widely effective in the everyday life of human beings? This, perhaps, is too ambitious a hope. Yet such is the opportunity which lies before our schools today. Can they rise to it?





# Rating with the Group

By GERTRUDE CHITTENDEN

**K**EEPING up with the Joneses" is a trite phrase often used in describing socially greedy people. It is absolutely inadequate when applied to the social aspirations of adolescents. They must keep up not only with the Joneses, but with the Smiths, the Browns, the Whites, and everyone else in the crowd. What all of these people think and do is of vital importance to the sixteen-year-old. In fact, if he can't keep up with them his life is hardly worth living at all. He rarely does or says anything without first considering what the members of his group will think about it.

This urge to be an accepted member of a group is noticeable from the preschool period on through adulthood. It is a well-known fact that it reaches its peak during the period of adolescence. With this all-important desire for approval by the group come many problems, many situations, too often mishandled by unsympathetic adults.

The adolescent's social group is an extremely important one. He is just at the stage where he is groping into adulthood physically, mentally, emotionally, and socially. He is passing through a period of experimentation. He needs social contacts. He needs the opportunity to try out various social reactions and to discover by this process of trial and error which ones are acceptable and which ones are not. Fifteen-year-old Mary, who has always obtained what she wanted at home by weeping, will find that in her social group her infantile behavior is more likely to bring loud laughter than the fulfillment of her desires. She realizes then and there that she needs to change her behavior if she wishes to maintain her position in the group. Isn't it better for Mary to make this discovery at fifteen than at thirty-five? The adolescent crowd provides an excellent opportunity for normal social growth. The give-and-take among members of the group; the wholesome boy-girl relationships; the matter-of-fact, frank discussions of present-day affairs—all are valuable in their preparation for adulthood. One author has stated that "the crowd probably does more to bring about normal social growth than teachers and parents combined."

The importance of groups is widely recognized. Schools foster various clubs and societies, a different type for almost any interest that an adolescent might have, ranging from academic groups such as Latin or literature societies to athletic clubs. Churches sponsor similar groups. It is in such organizations that the

adolescent has an opportunity to display his talents before an appreciative audience, to test his power as a leader, to express himself in whatever way he can best do so. He has a chance to see just what his contemporaries honestly think of him. He forms firm friendships that may last a lifetime. He may meet his future marriage partner. Certainly such groups meet a very vital need.

**H**OWEVER, it is the spontaneous social group that is likely to have the most lasting influence on the individual social patterns of its members. Occasionally this spontaneous group and one of the school- or church-sponsored groups coincide. Membership in the spontaneous social group seems to be based on several things that cannot quite be analyzed. Usually there is a leader around whom the group is formed. Usually the members live somewhere near each other, at least in the same general part of town. Usually there is a certain similarity of interests. Beyond these general factors, there do not seem to be any tangible bases for judging the probable make-up of a group, although we know there are many other criteria for eligibility to membership.

This is the social group which often causes parents much concern. Sometimes there are one or two members of the group who are not of the type parents would choose as associates for their child. This is the place for parents to stop and remember that adolescence is a period of trial and error. The young person will never learn to choose friends wisely until he has had a chance to contrast the desirable and the undesirable. If he has been fortified, through wise home training, with a knowledge of the desirable qualities to look for in a friend, he will soon drop the undesirable companion. Boys and girls of this age consider the choice of their friends one of their rights, not to be interfered with by parents. The surest way to encourage them to associate with a person they have chosen is to forbid them to see that person.

Probably one of the most effective means of dealing with the problem of the undesirable companion is to invite him to the home of the adolescent as often as possible. This means that the parents will have to conceal their dislike for the guest and show him all the courtesies that they would a friend. Seen in the light of the adolescent's own family background, the faults of the companion are likely to stand out in high relief. The chances are ten to one that the invitation won't

need to be repeated more than a few times. Adolescents are reasonable and perfectly willing to concede their mistakes, often evidencing a nice sense of humor. Their problems would seem so much less serious if parents could realize this.

Sometimes the activities of the group are alarming to parents. True, what one member does they all must do. Due to inexperience there is a certain lack of judgment shown. But the average adolescent is intelligent enough to take care of himself. To quote from a recent discussion of the characteristics of adolescents—"Facts about the mental maturity of adolescents suggest that they are as capable of thinking for themselves as they will ever be. The intellectually superior high-school student is more capable of thinking through his own problems than some of the adults who attempt to direct his conduct. In order to act with a maximum of intelligence, however, he needs experience in solving life's problems." Here is where the mature judgment, wisdom, and understanding of the parent can function.

Often the cooperation of parents of the members of a crowd can do much to guide indirectly the activities of that crowd. Planned parties in the various homes or in rented community buildings provide the desired social contacts and, at the same time, adult guidance. Too often, in rural communities especially, there is no provision made for entertainment. This means that the crowd must drive to some distant town to a dance or to a movie. Certainly the fault lies not with the

adolescents, to whom the desire for social contact is too great to be suppressed, but with the adults in that community who are not "up on their toes" enough to realize their needs.

There is a rather amusing paradox in the clothing problem of adolescence. The boy or girl wishes to dress like others and at the same time to be distinctly different. Almost in the same breath fourteen-year-old Jane will say, "I must wear silk stockings because all the other girls are wearing them, *but* I don't want to wear that dress; it is made just like everybody else's." There is a conflict which makes dressing a very difficult and time-consuming process. In a questionnaire study, it was found that of 1,400 subjects 52.5 percent of the boys and 59.9 percent of the girls reported that adolescence was the time in their lives when happiness was most affected by matters of clothing. The study revealed also that the greatest factors in choice of clothing were the approval of other people and escape from criticism.

Since it is so painful for the adolescent to be different from the crowd, sympathetic adults will let their tastes, and even their better judgment, be swayed within reasonable limits by the fashion dictates of the crowd. After all, it is much more important that Jane have congenial friends and a feeling of security in her own group than that she wear long or short hose, flat or high heels.

If the question of expense is a factor in clothing the



adolescent to meet the standards of his group, parents can again appeal to his intelligence. A sensible talk about the family's finances and the adolescent's rightful share in them will usually be a help. If he has had a part in planning the family budget and has his own personal account, he knows how much he has to spend and will make his plans accordingly. To be sure, he will probably spend most of his money for clothes and he will make some sad mistakes. Remember that he is experimenting. He needs to.

**I** BELIEVE THAT the greatest problem of adolescence is not one concerning the "true-to-form" boy or girl who has his established place in a group and is growing socially, but is that of the "left-out" adolescent. Perhaps he hasn't matured as rapidly as others of his own age so that he finds himself, a child, in a group made up of people all aspiring to become adults in the shortest possible time. Perhaps he lives in the country and cannot easily get in touch with others his own age. Perhaps he lacks finances. Perhaps he just can't lay his finger on the trouble, but is quite conscious of his lack of a certain something that is essential for acceptability in a group. Whatever the cause, he needs sympathy from someone who understands and can give him some real help in finding a spot for himself. This person needs always to keep the confidence of the child so that he may know what he is thinking and feeling.

If we can just make the unpopular adolescent feel that he is not at all unique, that there are literally thousands of other fifteen-year-olds who are just like him, we shall have done much to remove that feeling of being a "freak" that completely destroys self-confidence. Investigators have found that one of the problems most frequently mentioned by highschool students is that of feeling left out, of not being wanted by the group. Often the adolescent who feels very unpopular is considering only the few socially prominent young people as *the* group, and failing to recognize the existence of the other less outstanding but nevertheless worthwhile adolescents around him. He should be encouraged to look for his friends in this latter group.

It is amazing to see how quickly a group will open wide its arms to someone who is skilled in some sport which interests the group. It is quite possible for a person to shift from the status of unpopularity to that of popularity if he becomes an expert on the tennis

court. Every adolescent should have the chance to try out various sports and become proficient in one or two of them. But the admission ticket to a group need not be skill in a sport. The person who can do *anything* well is very likely to be welcomed to a group if the thing he can do is interesting to the group members.

The inability to dance often excludes an adolescent from social events. Why not give him a few dancing lessons? He needs to develop this skill just as he does swimming or tennis. Another way to handle this problem is to arrange social gatherings where dancing is not essential. The person who plans such gatherings must be very certain that they are lively and interesting enough to be really fun.

Most of all, adults need to prevent these unfortunate adolescents from taking themselves too seriously. This does not mean unsympathetic criticism or belittlement of their problems. It does mean the tactful leading of the child to see that the stage through which he is passing is only a stage in his development, that his present unpopularity is no indication of future unpopularity, and that being invited to a dance isn't one of life's major issues. One author likens guiding a youth through adolescence to nursing a child through a siege of measles in the days when there were not competent physicians to make authoritative statements. We can make his life a little more pleasant; we can lighten the pain; we can offer sympathy; but we can no more avoid adolescence than we could the measles.

**W**OULD THAT EVERY PARENT dealing with an adolescent had a sparkling sense of humor and a profound respect for the intelligence and good sense of the adolescent. Surely the father in the following little dialogue could not help but be impressed with his son's ability to reason:

*Son:* Did you beat me when I was a child?

*Father:* Yes, for your own good.

*Son:* Then, why shouldn't I beat you if beating does a person good? Besides, a father deserves to be beaten much more than a child does. He has less excuse for doing wrong.

Given a normal adolescent, and understanding, reasonable, respectful parents, the period of adolescence, in spite of all of its potential pitfalls, should be a pleasant period for both adult and child.



## As Told by Our National Chairmen

**T**HE POSTMAN HAS COME AND GONE, leaving me, as usual, many, many letters. But one letter has attracted my attention because it tells of a boy and girl who have been able to continue in school this year because of help given them from a Student Aid fund.

The state Student Aid chairman whose letter I am referring to, tells me that her state has met with great success by offering state life memberships for ten dollars. All money received in this way is kept in a Student Aid fund. She writes that from the minute this offer was made the work has gone forward by leaps and bounds. Both of these young people were helped by this fund.

There is the story also of a young man ready to enter his senior year in college who needed money to make it safe for him to take his place with his class. When the Student Aid chairman heard of his plight she suggested that a "penny march" be held at the fall meeting of the State Congress. Before the convention adjourned \$100 had been raised which was given to the student and he will graduate in June!

Throughout our membership hundreds of young people are in school today because of help given through our Student Aid committees. Perhaps in our midst there are boys and girls who are anxious and in need of help that they may stay in school. The inspiration which comes from learning that young people are being given a chance in life because of our interest and help is beyond expression. The opportunity to help these young people is ours!

Have *you* a Student Aid committee working in *your* state?

MRS. FREDERICK H. DEVERE, *Student Aid*

**S**OME FIFTY NEW county or regional public libraries have been established this fall and winter in a number of states, as a result of organized action by parent-teacher associations and others who believe books and library service are essential. State grants have been available in a number of instances, and WPA demonstrations often paved the way for formal, legal establishment. Evidently the time is ripe for action—either for the whole state or for a region or county—toward our goal of adequate public library service for everybody.

Encouragement also comes from emphasis on library needs in the recent New York State Regents' Inquiry. The report, "Education for Public Life; a New Program for the State of New York," recommends that the state appropriate \$500,000 annually for grants to aid county or regional libraries.

JULIA WRIGHT MERRILL, *Library Service*

**W**HAT ARE THE SATISFACTIONS in homemaking today? It is true that creative opportunities in the home are lessened so far as certain kinds of activities are concerned. What can take the place of these to bring equal satisfaction to the homemaker and enjoyment to the family? The answer may be found in some homes in every community in which resourceful parents encourage both individual and family hobbies which often result in avocations. In these homes the children usually share the everyday routine activities involved in preparing and serving food and maintaining a reasonable standard of cleanliness, thus leaving time for all to pursue special interests. Through such working and playing together some of the most significant ideals and attitudes of home and family life are developed.

FLORENCE FALLGATTER, *Homemaking*



# Projects and Purposes

## The Parent-Teacher Association in a Democracy

By ANNA H. HAYES

**L**OOKING about us, we can hardly fail to realize that we are living in a world in conflict with itself, blaming its lack of harmony on the home, the school, the church, the statesman, or the politician, depending upon which one of those folks or institutions we know least about, but almost never upon ourselves or the groups to which we belong.

After all, it doesn't make much difference now who is to blame. Our problem is to sift out the false from the true in idealism affecting the stability of our democracy. We seem to see "a world beset with ardent strife, with strikes and war and fretful murmurings, and hungry babes, and weary, anxious eyes of mothers, worn with futile bargainings." But what makes it so is important only so long as it may help to overcome the world's illness.

Few of us, by ourselves, are able to judge the value of standards, ideals, and experiences dominating the world today. Few of us, working singly, can decide which of the disturbing elements are of temporary value, ready to be cast out of the pattern for living, and which are of such basic worth that they should be preserved and adjusted to serve usefully in an improved pattern for living.

The parent-teacher association holds a rare opportunity in such a field and no other organization is more likely to decide values more fairly than is the P.T.A. First of all, it holds for its central interest the well-being of children and youth, and planning for tomorrow must surely be in the interest of children and youth. Second, it is the only organization in our land which makes a place for the *service* of every man, woman, and older youth interested in children and a child's chances for success, regardless of the religion they accept, the race they belong to, or the political party they espouse, and without regard for their social or economic status in the community. Finally, it recognizes the fact that society will profit as all of its members become interested in society, and that no one remains outside the circle of responsibility for social determining.

If society is unstable, society needs a stabilizer, and that agency which can draw into active membership the greatest number of its adult population is altogether likely to determine the course of society, whether that course be stable or chaotic, destructive or constructive. Here the responsibility is a heavy

**This is the seventh article in the Parent-Teacher Study Course: "The Family in a Democracy."**

one for the P.T.A., holding, as it does, opportunity for contact with all parents of children in school from primary grade to college.

A few years ago Dr. Eula Hunter, former president of the Classroom Teachers of the United States, writing for *Child Welfare*, stated that this is the most important time in the history of education to be a teacher, because we have now the first generation of children needing to accept world citizenship. Agreeing with Dr. Hunter, let us go a bit further and suggest that this is also the most important time in the history of education to be a parent, because the present generation of youth must not only acquire world consciousness, but must in some way recover the poise which has so long been a characteristic of our nation—poise flexible enough to accept new ideas, stable enough to refuse emotional hysteria. The present generation of adults needs to acquire it along with them.

Together all of us, young and old, must realize that life is truly a matter of individual determination, but that there can be no individual security until society as a whole recovers its poise and unites upon an idealism consistent with the welfare of the group.

If any community can agree upon the major ideals and issues which are worthy of its children, that community is a safety zone in these United States, and when every community, discovering such worthy ideals, can unite to effect a pattern for living, a program of conduct, worthy of its children, America is safe.

**B**UT WHO are "the community"? The community seems to hold some power, some influence, which is not a part of the accepted philosophy of the average home or school or church within it. Yet we know that every member of a community must have come from a home and must have received something of influence from the school, and directly or indirectly from the church. Why should the community develop ideals and patterns for conduct which neither the good home, the school, nor the church can approve?

Is it because there is no medium through which its members all may unite to produce patterns for conduct which become the standard for the community?

LET US TAKE a look at the "average" community—neither the ready-made, scientifically planned social Utopia which leaves little room for initiative or individual responsibility, nor the "wide open" town, so planned that adequate revenue will be realized from licenses of one kind or another, but just the average community.

Usually, there are four general divisions of citizens in it. First, the aggressive leaders, who are members of the Chamber of Commerce and of service clubs, leaders in the P.T.A. and in women's civic clubs—those people who are really concerned about community problems and willing to plan and work for community improvement. Second, the citizens who are passively ready to help with a given task when they are directed by the active leaders—those people who are willing to solicit for the Community Chest and ready to assist with this or that campaign, but whose constructive interest does not extend to continuous effort for any cause whatever. Third, those citizens who are utterly indifferent to public affairs—often, unfortunately, affluent and educated wasters whose personal comfort and pleasure absorbs their every moment and who frequently, willingly or unwillingly, give the impression that the cultured do not concern themselves with the common problems of the community. Fourth, those people who live on the fringes of society, in the community but not of the community, unable or indisposed to be self-sustaining—people who have slipped into the "dependent class," which has no place in civic life except to accept its charities, no voice in civic affairs except the voice of protest against the society which sustains them. Tragically, a good many people who have formerly occupied a place in one of the other designations have slipped on the skids of the depression into this unfortunate group, and have accepted the limitations imposed by a society determined to "take care of" its dependents.

What does it matter? What can we do about it?

As long as there are insurmountable barriers between groupings of society the community is losing a part, at least, of its forward drive.

Talent is not limited to any one division of society, and we may discover that the sinister influence of a community, which is not representative of its good homes, schools, and churches, is developed because there is no medium through which the ideals of the masses may be tempered and fused into an acceptable program of benefit to all.

MANY OF US ARE INCLINED to feel—even in parent-teacher groups—that the future is safe if the patterns for group living are planned by high-visioned intellectuals. But is it not likely that the future will be a realization of high idealism only in so far as the masses are able and willing to accept and to apply that idealism? It is not likely that the masses will

accept with any degree of enthusiasm, nor for any length of time, the ideals and patterns for living for which they had no part in the planning.

I am trying to say that we cannot expect to improve the outlook for America's children as long as there are fringes and barnacles on society. In some way, all divisions of society must be absorbed into group planning and group activity in which they are made to feel, not patronage, obeisance, or tolerance, but actual membership.

Anna Steese Richardson, speaking of the parent-teacher association, said: "This organization holds the key to the critical situation of today, because it gives place to every person who reaches the child in school, because it is a real cross-section of society." And may we add that the P. T. A. in some communities actually guides and directs people of every walk of life to an intelligent interest in education and social welfare, and gives to them a definite place in planning and carrying out plans for community improvement.

IN ONE SCHOOL DISTRICT where more than half the patrons were dependent upon relief, the principal noted the failing morale of her pupils. She noted the growing indifference to ideals of citizenship, increasing difficulties on the playground, and an increasing number of low progress records. She appealed to the parent-teacher association leaders for help to solve the problem. A cautiously conducted survey revealed that great numbers of the patrons were living in hovels, shacks, and tents, some with a brave attempt to maintain a semblance of household order, some entirely abandoned to their fate.

Tactfully, P. T. A. leaders set about to organize a "Home Improvement Club," knowing that a "Parent Education Study Group," as we usually designate such an activity, would by its very title defeat their purpose. At first, mothers only were organized, and for a while membership was limited to those who lived in shacks and tents, but as confidence and optimism increased, others were asked to join, until little by little the "forgotten mothers" began to feel less oppressed by the isolation of poverty, began to know the joy of belonging. Questions of parent-child relationship were constantly discussed, newer and better ways of preparing simple meals of carrots, potatoes, bread, and beans were demonstrated. Pot-luck lunches brought out the unsuspected ingenuity of members in making attractive and palatable the meager and unvaried fare possible to most of the members.

Then the genius of the leaders devised a way for the parent-teacher association to buy membership cards from the state treasurer—eighty of those little blue cards which indicate that the possessor is a constructive builder in the democracy of childhood interest. Parents were given opportunity to earn the right to possess membership cards by attending the local parent-teacher association meetings or

parent education study groups, and it is gratifying to note that all cards were earned within the minimum time, thirty-two by fathers and fifty-eight by mothers.

The result was a reconstructed community! Parents who had become dependent liabilities of the community had found that by the magic of holding real membership in a respected community group they had a gift to give to society, that they were needed in the world of people and events.

The effect upon the children was at once apparent. Citizenship is a giving attribute, and can flourish only where opportunity for giving is possible, and responsibility is developed with that giving, no matter how small the gift.

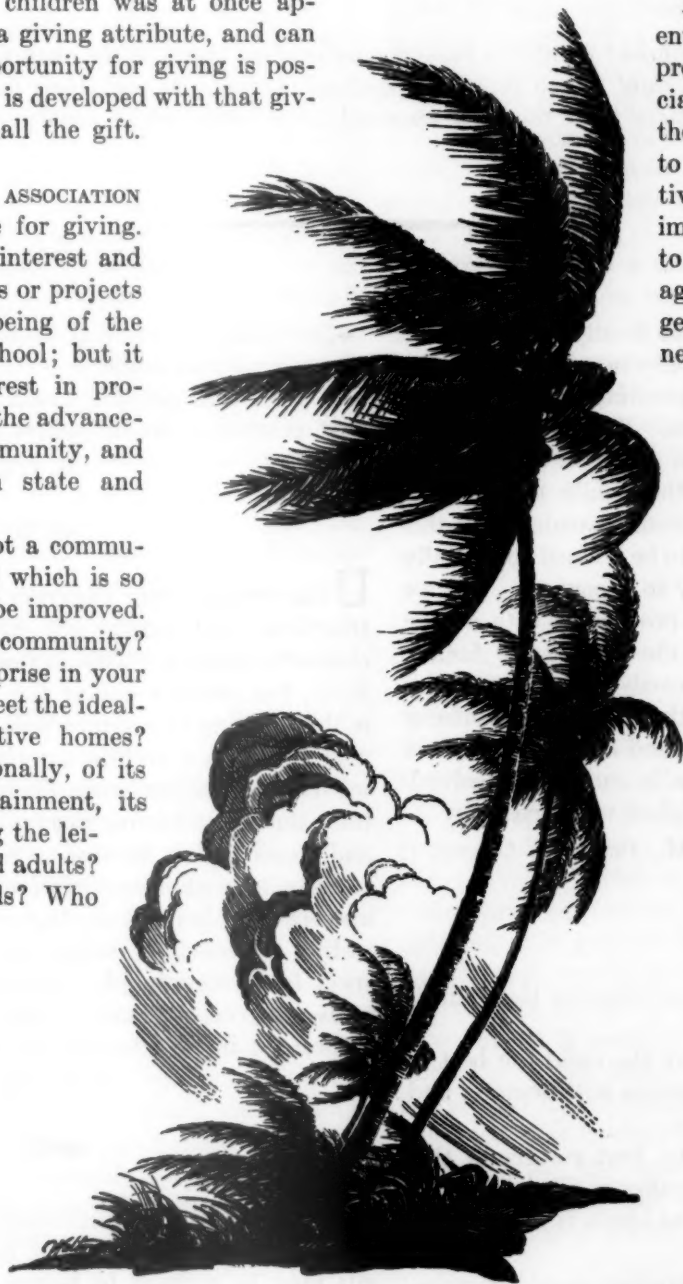
**T**HE PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATION should provide a place for giving. The gift may be only interest and cooperation in programs or projects planned for the well-being of the children in a single school; but it soon becomes an interest in programs and projects for the advancement of the entire community, and finally an interest in state and nation.

There is probably not a community in our broad land which is so perfect that it cannot be improved. Is that true of your community? Does community enterprise in your village, town, or city meet the idealism of its representative homes? Do you approve, personally, of its institutions, its entertainment, its provision for absorbing the leisure hours of youth and adults? Who sets its standards? Who

should set them? Should they be set, or just permitted to grow up, like Topsy?

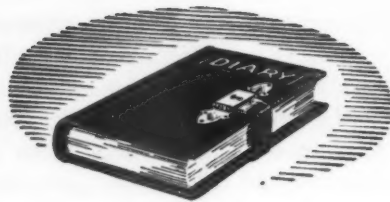
Every community in a democracy deserves citizens willing to serve its needs and able to recognize the need for service. To recognize the needs and plan effectively for their fulfillment, demands the interest and cooperation of all people, privileged and underprivileged, meeting on common ground, realizing that the interest of each is bound to be the interest of the other before it can be realized with completeness.

Much has been done by parent-teacher associations to improve understanding and appreciation of education, to establish the value of community health, to provide for leisure time activities for young and old; to improve cultural opportunities; to safeguard young offenders against society and to improve generally the public consciousness of its responsibility to children and youth. But a challenge remains for the parent-teacher association, and will remain until every parent and every teacher of every child in America accepts *active responsibility* for "a community which recognizes and plans for his needs; protects him against physical dangers, moral hazards, and disease; provides him with safe and wholesome places for play and recreation; and makes provision for his cultural and social needs."





# THESE ARE



# OUR CHILDREN

ONE OF THE most significant factors in human relationships today is the changing function of the family. We have asked eight young people, highschool students, to give their frank statements of what they themselves believe to be the most essential contribution which family life should make to youth today.

DURING THE PAST CENTURY the family has become a democracy for the first time. The new order has most affected us younger members, granting us new freedom and subsequent responsibilities. We are more independent of family jurisdiction, more on our own.

We do not demand less of the family group, however; rather our needs have become broader. By this we do not mean that we expect to be trained specifically for each situation we are likely to encounter. But we do feel that the family should provide us with a code of attitudes and ideals about the life we are facing. Definite information we too easily forget; attitudes become part of us. They are the corner stones of our personalities and must be solid and secure if our lives are to be successful. The family may be dissolved, but the attitudes it has established will never die.

R. M., Portland, Oregon

THE FAMILY has the privilege of forming the youth's character.

The good family places before the child the best in the way of morals, culture, relations with society, and attitudes toward work and play.

The parents may achieve the best results in this character training by acting as decent Christian citizens. Merely talking about these ideals is futile. The child does as his parents do.

The child's personality development should progress with his character development. Here his personality reflects his character just as his character reflects his parents and home standards.

Necessary to any good character are the principles of a sense of responsibility and a sense of security, of the joy of companionship, of the development of such traits as initiative and resourcefulness.

The child's standard is indicative of the standard of his parents and home.

If American parents would follow these rules, the next generation would reflect their efforts gloriously.

M. O'C., Albion, New York

UNDOUBTEDLY THE GREATEST of the unlimited contributions that family life should make to youth is character training. This, in itself, covers a great many fields, but perhaps one of the most important phases is the building of a strong sense of values. The child who is taught a certain amount of independence and self-reliance is far more likely to rise in the world than the one who has always been given everything and considered it his due. Children cannot be given too soon an understanding of what constitutes fairness and equality in one's dealings with all types of people in life. Respect for public and private property, respect for personal rights, respect for creeds and customs, respect for individuals—all this will be incorporated in a high sense of values.

F. B., Montgomery, Alabama

THE FAMILY as an institution has one great gift to give our American youth of today: guidance. This gift may be difficult to bestow, due to the fact that during the past several decades family life, as it has always been known, has disappeared with alarming swiftness.

Perhaps this disappearance of home life has been because we have lost the feeling that youth needs guidance from their families. The school system in its many highly developed forms seems to provide



for most of the needs of youth which hitherto have been satisfied by home or family life.

If this is true, family life would seem to have very little to give our youth. However, I do not believe this to be the case. I think that the family contributes—or should contribute—mental, physical, and spiritual guidance in such abundance to the child that throughout his life he will be grateful for that early training which can best be obtained through family contacts.

M. S., *Danville, Kentucky*

**W**HAT IS THE MOST important thing that a family should contribute to the youth of today? There are hundreds of things that youth of today should have, such as courage, and self-confidence. To me, however, the most important thing a family can contribute to youth of today is preparedness for shouldering its own responsibilities. The average youth knows no responsibility because the minute a thing becomes a responsibility the parent takes it off his hands. Parents excuse by saying that the youth will have enough responsibilities when he is grown. But that is the point! The youth is going to shoulder his responsibilities when he is grown and it is better to have him outfitted to shoulder these responsibilities when the time comes. With the world uprooted as it is today every family would do well to contribute to its youth the ability to cope with responsibilities.

K. E., *Shreveport, Louisiana*

**I** BELIEVE THAT the greatest contribution that family life should make to youth today is inspiration. Viewing the present chaotic condition of the world, I feel that the inspiration derived from family contact is a feasible remedy. In family life, close contacts are formed, each adding a different inspirational slant; the mother, a Christian cleanliness; the father, a masculine interest; older children, records and achievements to surpass; and younger children, an admiration to preserve. These single contributions are yardsticks, each demanding that youth measure up to the highest standards. The solution of all scholastic, athletic, and social problems unfolds with this inspiration. From the athletic standpoint, I can definitely state that the greatest factor for my "will to do well" is the presence of my family as spectators. This is

but one of many examples underlying the powerful feeling of family inspiration which will fit today's youth for tomorrow's world.

H. P. S., *Madison, Wisconsin*

**R**EGARDLESS OF THE UNDERTAKING, if there has not been preparation, a satisfactory completion cannot result. To prepare the youth of today for the morrow, is the foremost contribution that family life should make to youth. The full or partial accomplishment of this is far from impossible, for this very good reason:

It is true that "love rules the world"; and love is the very foundation of true family life—love for each other, love for the finer creations of man, and, most significant and cherished, love for that which each of us holds divine.

Since a family is a small world in itself, with complexities which love solves best, could not the comparable difficulties of the larger world be overcome likewise by the combined effort of all?

So I believe that the preparation of youth for the morrow by the instillation of this characteristic of love into their lives should be the prime contribution of family life to youth today.

B. W., *Mitchell, South Dakota*

**F**AMILY LIFE is without a doubt the determining factor in the success or failure of an individual. The mutual associations and sympathetic understanding characteristic of family life are not found elsewhere. This relationship gives the individual a sense of security and develops the moral, social, spiritual, and cultural background necessary to cope successfully with everyday problems. Habits, moral, social, and cultural, come about as a result of family influence and associations. The general outlook on life is dependent on family relationships in the home.

Since the family is the most influential of all institutions, it is evident that character building must originate in the home. Good character is essential for success in all walks of life. It is self-evident, therefore, that the moral, social, and cultural training necessary for the development of good character is "the most important contribution that family life should make to youth today."

L. L. C., *Redondo Beach, California*

# Friends and Neighbors

By ROBERT P. TRISTRAM COFFIN

**D**ON'T suppose there is anybody in the world who doesn't want to have good neighbors and good friends. Now the best way—and, in fact, the only one—to have good friends and neighbors is to be one of them yourself. Like most laws, this law begins at home. It begins with a single hungry person who wants to get on in the world. And the only road ahead is to understand the loneliness and hunger in others. Then when a man gets stirred up enough about the hungers and lonelinesses in other men and goes about doing what he can to ease them, he will forget all about those silences and famines that sit about the small fire on his own hearthstones.

I think the best thing that can happen to a man or a woman in search of friends and neighbors is to enter the world as one of a large family of children. Large families are one of the reasons the human race has come so far from savagery in a few thousands of years. There is nothing like a large company of brothers and sisters to knock the corners off a square-headed or square-chinned boy, round him off, and polish him up fit for human society. I found it so. I thank my lucky stars for being born one of ten children. I guess I had about as many square corners on me as any boy was ever born with. I still have some. But I had a lot of them worn down by having to share my playthings with others, by having to take care of younger fry and keep them from falling into ponds and oceans and temptations, and by having to think in the terms of happiness for a whole set of people instead of one rather lonely and brooding boy. Don't think I enjoyed it altogether. I didn't. There were times when I wished I was a whole family of frogs and not one small, cool frog who had to swim around others in a puddle. There were times when I was tempted to let a smaller unit or two of the family eat the toadstools in the pasture or investigate the hotness of a hot stove. I could sympathize with Joseph's ten older brothers when they got him alone in his coat of many colors out among the sheep at last and decided that Egypt was the place for him. But such times grew fewer and farther between after I got by the savagery of, say, seven or eight. And there were other times when having many brothers and sisters around was like living in a three-ring circus, or living in Canaan Land and having milk all turned out and honey on all the flapjacks! So I began civilization at home.

**I**F FAMILIES STILL RAN LARGE, I believe sincerely there would be fewer cases in the divorce courts. Getting on with a brother or a sister is the beginning of the wisdom of getting on well with a husband or a wife. On the whole, I think it ought to be easier to get on with an attractive stranger, as 'most every husband or wife is pretty apt to be, than with a brother whose way of rolling his stockings as he puts them on or humming the same tune out of tune is ancient history to you and very tiresome ancient history at that. Modern economics are against large families such as I grew up in. I know that. It is too bad, but we cannot hope to be born in clans again and work out all our bills of rights and ten commandments under one roof and before we have got into long pants or long skirts. But there are still brothers and sisters for most of us to begin to learn neighborliness by. Even one brother can be quite a large university!

**T**HE NEXT STEP IS COUSINS. Now cousins are probably the hardest persons of all to learn to live with. Utter strangers are much, much easier. Strangers don't move in on you by virtue of their blood relationship and take the swing at the time you most want it. And they don't have the trick of moving concealed muscles somewhere inside themselves and so never allow the old cat to die but swing away on and on in your swing all the morning. I can understand how the Cain and Abel trouble started! I had a lot of peculiarly thorny cousins. They were nigh my own height, they had the same square chins, and they wore the same kind of clothes that forked at the middle. They learned French and chess and Esperanto ahead of me, and when I caught up with them, they moved on into Greek and electricity and hieroglyphics! They took pains in being better chips of the old family block than I was. Tougher ones. They outsmarted me. So I lost a lot more corners, thanks to them. And I do thank them now. Once you have learned to live with cousins, you can live with anybody. You have a diploma in civilization. So I found very little difficulty in getting on with far-flung people I met in the war I attended as a man. I thank my cousins for that. They probably owe me a lot of thanks, too. For I was good at knocking off corners of chips myself. We all polished one another off beautifully.

Seriously, though, once you have learned to get on at home and in the homes of uncles and aunts, you

have gone a long way towards good neighborliness. The town and the city are only enlarged families. There are the same disciplines to be found in them. And the same love. Quarreling with a neighbor over who owns the fence between you is only another form of quarreling over the same rocking-horse. The world is full of rocking-horses, and most people, if they have not been properly brought up, want to sit on them all at the same time. Maybe the rocking-horses go by the name of railroads or colonies; but they are rocking-horses still. Selfishness is a sin against oneself. For one ought not to cheat oneself of the unadulterated joy of sitting on a rocking-horse for one ecstatic moment after it has been warmed by the heat of all the smaller pants that are round about and just before a dozen new pairs spring up to claim it. When you ride the horse under such conditions, you make up for lost time. You rock all over. As a man does when he gets a chance at the rocking-chair at night!

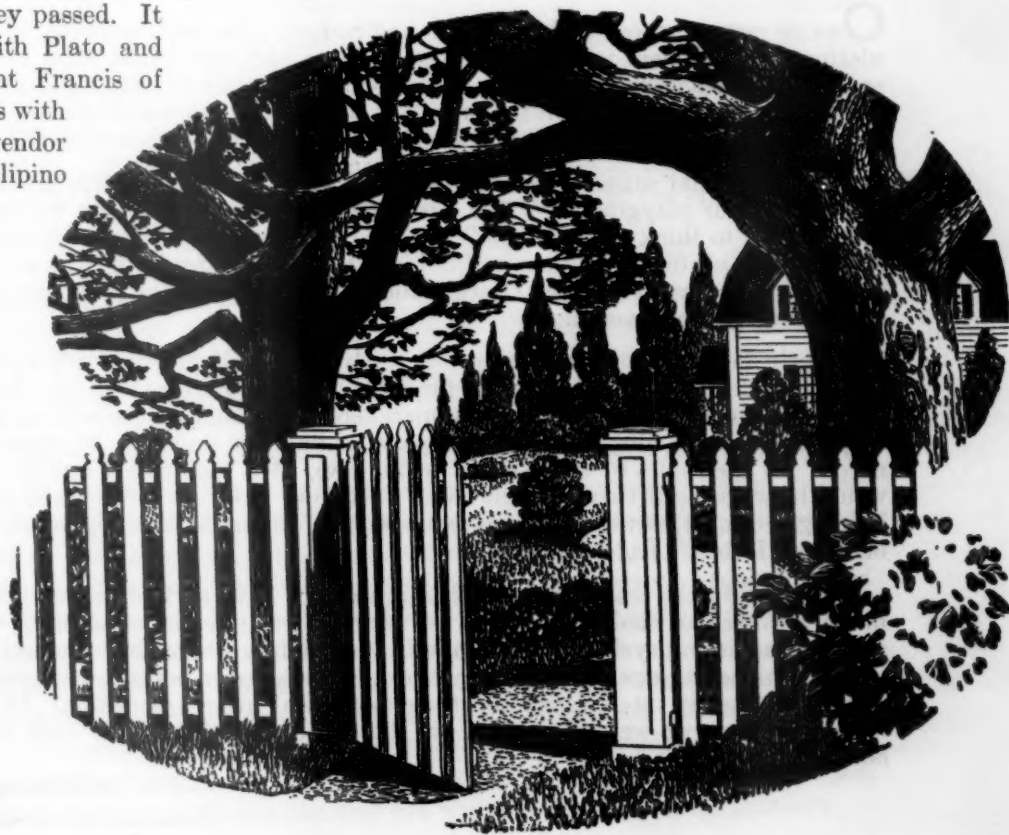
THE SCRIPTURES ARE NOT SO FAR OUT OF DATE. Thinking in the terms of a neighbor is thinking in the best terms for yourself. No man loves his own children so well as when he loves the little children of his friends across the way. The hard sayings of the Bible are the easy and golden rules for the best kind of living. How does the saying run?—*He who loveth his life shall lose it.*

Education is really getting to be neighbors. It is as simple, and as hard, as that. In one direction, it is getting to be neighbors and friends with your great-grandparents, with the hats and bonnets they wore just as much as the songs they sang, the poems they composed, and the laws they passed. It is getting to be friends with Plato and a medieval baron or Saint Francis of Assisi. Once you are friends with them, the Italian fruit vendor on your corner and the Filipino overseas, so very much alive still, will be easy to become neighborly with. But education is also making friends in another direction. It is making friends with your own great-great-grandchildren. They are harder to become acquainted with and understand, these far great-great-grandchildren of yours. They take a lot of knowing. But you can aspire to that knowledge. And they will be worth it. The best way to go about it is to do nothing they will be

ashamed of. If you have not built up walls against your own kin and kind, if you have not soiled your hands with hate and prejudice, and—the worst sin of all in the catalogue—indifference, if you have liked and got on with your neighbors here on this side of your street and over on all the other sides of the seas, those distant relatives-to-come will not be ashamed of you. For, believe history! we are getting on, even if it is very slowly. Nations are even going so far now as to be ashamed of the wars they make, and fight them without declaring them first! We have come that far. And that is something. And in that far future it will pay you to have your hands clean on your family tree and be remembered by your descendants as the pioneers in loving one's neighbor as oneself. The Bible laid down that law long years ago. We are beginning to see the wisdom in it now. Laws are made quickly. But it takes a long time to catch up with good ones. That is a good one. We are catching up.

And make no mistake, those distant descendants of yours *will* know about you. The world has become so well thumb-printed and registered that you will never be able to sink into the oblivion the Chaldeans slipped into. You will be known.

IN THE MEANTIME, if you haven't very many children to grow up in your house together, if your family is only a three- or four-decker one, adopt some of the children of your neighborhood. Think of them during some hours of the year as your own. They will sur-





prise you by their response. They will do good to your children. They will polish off their rough places and make them shine like Cornelia's jewels. And maybe you will learn from your large family of children the wisdom of thinking of your neighbors who keep house across the way as your brothers and sisters. And so you, too, will have your chance to grow up with your own wise children.

We are growing up, we nations. We are past the savage age of seven or eight. In a few thousands of

years—and they will go fast to your great-great-grand-children—it may be we shall have come of age. In the light of the Golden Rule all things are possible.

Let the man next door have the fence and welcome. Maybe, once he sees it won't keep you from coming over to see him when he needs you, he will rise up early in the morning some fine day and take the whole thing down.

What a chance that will be for a whole family of all the children in town to run and kick up their heels!



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ONE OF THOSE PERIODS of dead silence had arrived. The talk had been interesting and stimulating; the president in presenting the problem had capitalized upon the challenge of the speaker; the stage was all set for a rapid-fire discussion of ways and means. But no one would say a word. After a bit the president added a few more enthusiastic comments, looking straight at his fellow neighbors and seeing in their eyes a corresponding light of interest.

Again, "What suggestions have you as to how we can make this gift money go farthest in fixing up our playground?" And again, painful silence. "Suppose we have a few minutes intermission to think this through," ventured the teacher. Immediately there was a buzz of conversation all over the room as the ideas came tumbling forth that no one had dared to suggest in the formal session. Quickly the president sensed the situation as he passed from one visiting group to another.

Again he rapped for attention. "I sense we are all pretty much agreed that we need work as well as equipment in caring for these grounds. Personally I like Mr. James's idea of an all-day working bee. Is there any man here who would not be willing to give one day of time and to bring along a team and plow or hammer and saw or whatever else we may need?" In the midst of the nods of willingness, Mrs. Ash called out to ask if the women would be welcome if they brought along baskets of food. In a few more minutes a day had been agreed upon, duties had been assigned, and an ample dinner planned—and all without benefit of Robert's Rules of Order.

That night the teacher who was so anxious to have a "real parent-teacher association" in her rural school made an entry in her diary. "I was reminded of what we were told over and over again in psychology. Begin with the children where they are and go on from there to finer, higher things, to greater precision. However important parliamentary procedure may be, I suppose interest and effort are more vital to an association. At any rate, tonight we began where we were. I do hope we shall go on mastering only such machinery as may best serve our needs."

—WM. MCKINLEY ROBINSON,  
*National Chairman, Rural Service*



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## Editorial

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**I**N THE lingering presence of Founders Day it behooves us, for the moment at least, to become philosophical. There descends a stillness and calmness which unites parents and teachers, already drawn together by common objectives into a movement, to reflect upon the achievements of the past and to look with not a little impatience upon the work which still remains to be accomplished. Most of all is this true when we are brought face to face with the dangers which threaten those ideals and purposes which we believe to be the richness and strength of the movement. Truly man cannot live by bread alone. Man's ideals are the most intensely human of all his possessions. To be deprived of an opportunity to translate these ideals into reality is for him a tragedy.

Today we live in a world in which the glorious dream of justice, equality, freedom is threatened. Today we stand stunned before the broken ideals of humanitarianism, before unrest and suspicion and discord. Today amid the hostilities and animosities which exist between people and people, nation and nation, we see what appear to be insurmountable obstacles. It is not the burned manuscripts of writer and poet which we mourn; it is not the broken treasures over which men labored and which now lie in ruins. What we mourn is the loss of faith in democratic principles and in the democratic way of life. We mourn the fact that tomorrow's generation is being brought up without the highest advantages in physical, mental, social, and spiritual education.

**B**UT DISILLUSIONMENT and despair are not for those who believe in the parent-teacher movement. It is not for those whose human challenge is the call to promote the welfare of children and youth in home, school, and community. It is true perhaps that we are faced with problems such as we have never faced before; but a movement as well as an individual must know how to be patient, and how to wait. It must be flexible and know how to attach itself to things and how to detach itself from them when it has found them wanting. It must be strong enough to go on redefining and reinterpreting its democratic ideals in the light of new social conditions which in the end will result in greater strength and glory.

Democratic aims and ideals possess a unique and living power in that they stimulate man's most noble feelings and emotions. Through the years these democratic principles will be relived in new form. They will be different from the old—that is true; but their difference will be manifest in human lives of greater humility and courage, of fresh thought and intelligent action, of richer vigor and stronger purpose.

**A**RE WE PREPARED for the task which lies before us? Can we come out of this chaos more universal in our appeal, more permanent in our form, more powerful in our influence? Who is fitted for this task? For such a task only the strong hearted are ready; for such a task only the patient are suited. To such a challenge over two million parents and teachers who believe that through cooperative endeavor it is within their power to provide the best and fullest life for each and for all—to such a challenge these countless men and women will rise and conquer.

With such a philosophy before us, Founders Day just past becomes more than an event of celebration. It becomes a day which nourishes the present. It stirs and promotes growth. It becomes an event not prized for itself, but prized for the courage it has inspired, for the thoughts it has impelled. It becomes a day in which the past is brought in to the present, infusing the new life with the idealism of its founders.



# The Family: Democracy in Miniature

By KATHARINE WHITESIDE TAYLOR

**M**ICHAEL was four years old. In recognition of his years he was included for the first time in the family "roundtable," an informal discussion on the back porch. How to make Sunday a really happy day for this family of six with widely different tastes and needs was being earnestly discussed. After a time conflicting needs were reconciled by giving everyone the greater part of the day to himself to do what he wanted most, but saving the evening for family games, reading, and singing. At this point there came a very pleasant feeling of harmony and several moments of silence. Michael, who had not understood more than half of what was said, still got the full significance of this feeling and broke the silence by saying, "We are helping God, aren't we?"

Michael was profoundly right. The home is still the primary and most significant educational institution.

If we wish to develop citizens well able to take a creative part in the future of our country, we must recognize our homes as miniature democracies and welcome our children as contributing members from the beginning of their lives.

A family of six including at the one end a Michael of four and at the other a grandmother of eighty-four represents as many different points of view and conflicting needs and rights as many a larger social group. Working out common problems through genuine discussion in which the views of each are listened to and earnestly considered is the essence of the democratic process.

A home may be a genuine democracy even without such consciously democratic machinery. Democracy in the last analysis is more a matter of feelings and attitudes than of techniques, as a family living in a

two-room cabin in the mountains of Tennessee will illustrate. A teacher was taken home by a fourteen-year-old girl to visit the family. She was introduced to all the members except the grandmother, who was sitting in a rocker in the corner with a far-away look in her eyes. When the teacher asked "Aren't you going to introduce me to her?" the reply was, "Yes, after a while, but when granny is sitting over in her corner we never disturb her." Here in this crowded cabin with six people living in two rooms the eighty-year-old grandmother's right to privacy was cherished by all. We need look no further for a genuine democracy.

In developing homes as miniature democracies parents must remember two things. First, in a true democracy every member contributes according to his capacity and receives according to his needs. Second, it is only as one's basic needs are recognized and provided for that one can have genuine regard for the needs and rights of others. These principles are operative in all human relationships, whether in groups or between friends and marriage partners. The friend who monopolizes the conversation, who just waits for the commas in one's sentence to get in again without waiting for one to finish, is a dictator—at least in that relationship. So is the wife or husband who "thinks for" the other. The parent who from the beginning seeks to control every move and thought of his child is another.

Because of its primacy and emotional intensity, the parent-child relationship is the one which predetermines every other. As Confucius observed in his wisdom twenty-five centuries ago, if the parent-child relationship goes aright, all other human relations will come right as a matter of course. This statement is corroborated in a recent study by Professor Burgess of Chicago which points out that young people who have good relations with their parents have a better chance of achieving happiness with their marriage partners.

### What Needs Do Children Have?

**T**O MAKE SURE that from the beginning this potent parent-child relationship is making for wholesome growth, parents must be sensitized to their children's basic needs. Every child has three fundamental needs—the need for love, the need for achievement, and the need for understanding his world. And these needs start when the baby starts, not at some formal entry into childhood a few years later.

The baby's first birthright is the love of his parents, expressed with all the richness and joyousness they are capable of. It is a great tragedy due to incomplete understanding of psychological principles and exaggerated emphasis upon the physical detail of babies' lives, that during the last decades many babies have been denied full measure of this first essential—the

love of their parents—in the name of science itself!

Affection and human responsiveness are as essential for his developing personality as abundant food for his body. Experiments with foundlings in orphanages show that babies do not develop well socially, nor do they really flourish physically, until they are given some degree of affection and cuddling. From the very beginning, therefore, we must treat our babies as human beings, not as little plants or mechanisms, if we want them to develop warm, affectionate, *human* personalities. They should be cuddled and played with, rocked and sung to, and loved a goodly proportion of their waking day. And those babies fed on bottles should certainly be held close in mother's arms throughout the feeding process to reassure them of mother's love.

Some will be saying, "But won't we spoil our babies if we play with them and rock them and give in to them in this fashion?" Strange though it seems, it is not the babies who are understood and whose needs are richly fulfilled who are the "spoiled" babies. It is babies whose basic needs of one kind or another remain unsatisfied. We do not need to be afraid of loving our children too much if we remember two things: first, that they are learning to do everything for themselves that is within their power, using their capacities to the fullest; second, that at the same time they are receiving all the love we are able to give they are beginning to understand the basic law of human relations by learning to respect our rights, too.

When it comes to letting children do things for themselves, many parents quite unwittingly commit great sins against child nature. Beth Wellman's article in the *National Parent-Teacher* for January 1939 on "How the Child's Mind Grows" suggests that an enriched environment in the early years is far more potent for developing exceptional mental ability than was formerly supposed. She points out that to insure optimum mental growth parents must welcome and build upon the child's every impulse to do for himself and find out for himself. Yet most babies' first impulses to put their little arms into their shirts are ignored because nurses and mothers have been so in the habit of holding the little arm stiff while the garment is pulled on. At five months, if given a chance, babies will begin to put their own arms in or to hold the proper arm out for the next armhole. At six months, when development is normal, babies will reach for the spoon and try to feed themselves.

This attempt at feeding himself is baby's first effort at independence and should be welcomed and respected. It really isn't at all important if he gets his cereal in his hair, all over his front, the chair, and the floor, to say nothing of mother's dress. This bit of untidiness is really less important than the joy of getting a few mouthfuls successfully into the proper receptacle. A wise investment might be an all-enveloping piece of



oilcloth pinned around baby's neck the way barbers prepare ladies for shampoos. Equipment which makes it possible for him to help himself is as essential to his proper development as the right books are for a college student.

Several months later, when the little fingers begin fumblingly to push buttons toward their holes, the fingers of mothers and nurses should get behind the button at the proper moment to push it through successfully so that here again baby will have the feeling of achievement, the greatest impetus to further effort. And as he really learns to do these things for himself he will be taking his share in the work of the family at his level of ability.

Babies who know from their daily experience that there will be at least one hour when they will be played with and rocked and sung to and thoroughly enjoyed, will be much more content to play by themselves for the rest of the day, just as babies who are adequately nourished do not cry at odd times for meals. Babies who have playthings within reach, perhaps tied to the sides of their beds, can learn to respect the needs of the rest of the family who sleep later in the morning. When his needs are met the baby can respect the needs of others.

When baby starts to crawl, and later to walk, he comes into violent conflict for the first time with the rights of others. Yet if he is restricted to the confines of a four-foot-square pen for all his waking hours, he is losing important opportunities for getting about and finding things out for himself and, even more important, for respecting the property rights of others. He should be given at least one hour a day of freedom, when mother can be sufficiently watchful so that when he starts investigating her powder or perfume his hands can be taken away with all kindness and gentleness and led to baby's shelves, where equally interesting things have been put for his manipulation. Mother should take time to explain: "These are mother's things. Those are baby's things. They are nicer, anyway. Play with them and then mother can be happy, too." This process should be repeated often enough for the baby's growing understanding to grasp the meaning of the words. Given a chance, babies do understand such things. When one is learning a foreign language he understands what is said long before he can participate

in an animated conversation. Babies a year old or even a month or two younger can begin to understand the laws of human relations.

If from the beginning law is combined with love and kindness and the child is helped to understand that laws are to increase happiness rather than interfere with it, he will be prepared to accept and enjoy group regulations later. It is safe to say that every adult who resents authority and who seeks to assert himself at the expense of others has had an unhappy experience with authority in his family life.

### SIGNS of SPRING

*I saw three kites against the sky;  
A patch of crocus, pale and shy;  
A wobbly snowman, bathed in tears;  
A gardener out with pruning shears.*

*I heard a bird on leafless tree;  
An organ-grinder's melody;  
And everywhere upon the street  
The skip and dance of children's feet.*

*And as I watched there came to view  
Bikes and scooters, gay and new;  
Marbles, jacks, and sidewalk toys,  
And laughing little girls and boys.*

*So there I stood 'twixt seasons two  
And made this little rhyme for you;  
For even I must rise and sing  
Amid these harbingers of Spring.*

DOROTHY L. JORDAN

### Learning to "Do unto Others"

IT IS UPON the entry of the second child into the family that the real drama of life begins. When the older child first sees a little "usurper" in his mother's arms he almost inevitably feels resentment whether he realizes it or not. Parents should recognize this as normal and not scold the child for it, yet find ways of meeting it constructively. It is not the absence of conflict but the wholesome solution of conflict that makes for growth and happiness both in the individual and in the family.

The way parents understand and help resolve the turmoil in the older child's breast over the arrival of the new baby is very potent in determining his permanent emotional patterns, whether they will be ruthless or tolerant, malicious or kindly. One mother, when anyone made a fuss over her new baby, always took care to put her arm around her little three-year-old girl and say "Haven't we got a nice big girl, too?" In this way the three-year-old still felt herself an important and beloved member of the family and, as a "nice big girl," took a proprietary joy in doing little things for the baby.

Another mother was less wise. The second child fulfilled her longing for a boy and all her passion of motherhood centered itself on him. If the older child held on to her own things when the baby pulled at them, the mother would say, "You mean, selfish thing not to give in to the poor baby." Small wonder that the little five-year-old, not much more than a baby herself, wanted to injure "the poor baby" and one day pushed him out of his bed onto the floor, saying "I hate him! I hate him! I wish he were dead." The horrified mother sought clinical help. As her insight grew she tried different tactics and was delighted with results.

One evening the little girl saw her rocking the baby and said "That darn baby again!" The mother put the baby into his cradle and said, "Come here and let me rock you," taking the little girl onto her lap. The child looked surprised, then smiled broadly and looked over to the cradle, saying "Haven't we got a nice baby, mother!" Not until her own need for security was met could she enjoy and appreciate the baby.

### The Exceptional Child in the Family

**I**N FAMILIES having an exceptional child the problem of achieving happy relationships and genuine consideration for all is doubly complicated. The child who is physically or mentally handicapped so evokes the sympathy of parents that they frequently give him an undue share of their attention and resources, to the neglect of the other children. In such cases it is not surprising that the other children become resentful and intolerant of the handicapped child. Though a certain amount of this sort of feeling is normal and not to be worried over, if allowed to become the dominant tone it is bad for the handicapped child and at least equally bad for the brothers and sisters who harbor it.

Of course, parents must do all in their power for the security and happiness of their handicapped child, but not at too great a sacrifice of the legitimate needs of their other children. Only as the fundamental needs of every child are met can there be an atmosphere of kindness and consideration, and the home remain a genuine democracy. And as the needs of normal children for love and for appreciated achievement are adequately met, they can become the parents' best allies in giving the exceptional child the friendliness and appreciation he needs. At the same time they will be learning one of the basic lessons of democracy—tolerance and helpfulness for those less fortunate.

It can be a very wholesome and constructive thing for the family as a group to focus on the needs of the exceptional child. One of the gravest dangers here from the point of view of the handicapped child is that he may be over-protected. When this happens the unfortunate child is robbed of one of his greatest satisfactions, the joy of successfully using those powers he does have. He should be helped to do everything he can for himself and to perform simple tasks for the benefit of the family. All he does should be received appreciatively and without the least suggestion that he should be doing more. Only in this way can he be made to feel himself a welcome and worthy member of the family.

An encouraging thing about the majority of handicapped children is that if they are treated in this way they become extremely amiable and lovable family members. Their appreciativeness and social responsiveness frequently offset their lacks in outside contacts. With the asset of a pleasing personality, these children may become self-supporting and have many

friends in spite of handicaps, even very serious ones.

In cases of extreme mental retardation or other severe handicap such as blindness or deafness, it may be wise from the standpoint both of the family and of the individual child to send him to an institution particularly adapted to his needs. In some cities there are special classes for such children which do meet their needs while they continue to live at home. When there are none it is usually far kinder to send the handicapped child at an early age to an institution where special training will be most fruitful. Not the desires or convenience of the parents, but the basic needs of the child must be the deciding factor. There is a case on record of a young man who passed his oral Ph.D. examination with honors in spite of total deafness. Thanks to intensive training in lip reading from the time he was two, his severe handicap of deafness was rendered almost negligible.

Parents hesitating to send their children may be reassured by visiting such schools. They are very happy places. The children enjoy living in an environment particularly adapted to their needs, where they can learn to use their powers successfully.

The problems of the family with the exceptionally bright child are entirely different. Too often these children are not given a chance to use their rich capacities to the full, but are confronted with tasks far beneath their powers. It is as painful for a gifted child to sit in idleness before tasks too easy for him as for a retarded child to struggle with tasks too difficult. The resulting ennui may lead to excessive daydreaming and listlessness, while the most significant faculties lie dormant.

At the other extreme they are over-stimulated and encouraged to show off. In such cases they are apt to become overbearing and insufferable socially. The result is that they are hated by the other children in the family and by their schoolmates as well. They are forced to retreat into magnificent but painful isolation. Such children should be provided with a rich environment and with tasks which put their powers to the test. In this way they will know the steady joy of accomplishment with its civilizing effect, and at the same time the humility born of seeing many fields still unconquered.

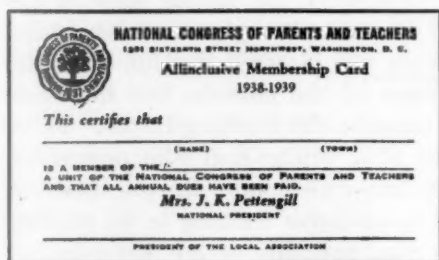
It is also particularly important that through genuine democracy in the family gifted children are helped to develop a sense of their own obligation to contribute richly to group living, and a real appreciation of the contributions of others which may be on a different level from theirs. In these ways they may be helped to reach their full flower without the blight of social and emotional maladjustment.

Families of gifted children have a particular obligation not only to these children but to the nation. Superior children have the capacity to originate and to carry through that make for the progress of the world. It is they who will be the leaders of tomorrow.



# I Join the Parent-Teacher Association

By ALICE HOPSON NISBET



Graham the second was asleep in an enormous old feather bed, worn out with the excitement of moving to the country. My helper Mary Ellen, daughter of the Mary Ellen with whom on vacations I used to gather chestnuts long ago, was studying her highschool lessons in her room.

Were all my evenings to be like this?

What had become of those evenings of gaiety and comradeship in the city—evenings that seemed now to belong to another world? When Graham and Jinny Brown and their friends went to see this play, to hear that symphony, foregathering afterwards at someone's apartment, where food and drink were purely incidental to the discussion which was the invariable night-cap. Provided that the heart to go anywhere should some day return to me, where could I go, living in this place? What could I do? With whom would I wish to associate?

I stared into my open fire and tried to keep my thoughts from dwelling on the fact that Graham, my husband, was dead. Up to now I had been too busy to indulge in many moments of self-pity.

The steeple clock on the mantelpiece above me struck eight. With dismay I remembered my promise to my neighbors the Taylors that when Friday evening came I would go with them to a meeting of the parent-teacher association. Yes, this was Friday.

A car was coming up my drive. When I went to the door a woman stood upon the step.

"Here we are, Mrs. Brown. Get your things on."

"I'm sorry," I began. "I've decided not to go."

"Oh, I'm so disappointed. Boy's not ailing is he?"

"No—oh, no; it isn't that. It's only that—it's only—"

To my horror I felt the tears coming. I stared helplessly at the kind face of my neighbor.

"The clock ticks too loud, doesn't it?" asked Molly Taylor.

"Wha-at?"

"The clock ticks too loud, doesn't it? Same's it

GREAT-AUNT Eurania's house creaked in the winter's-night wind.

New York City seemed a thousand miles away.

always does when there isn't the right kind of stillness in a house. I'm not going to urge you, Mrs. Brown, but truly if you'd ride along with Jim and me I think 'twould do you good. Step outside and see how pretty it is," the woman added gently.

I looked. Below us the lights of little Flanders village twinkled like stars. The moon scudding across the skies was flooding valley and hills with a soft radiance.

"I'll go," I said suddenly. "Come in, Mrs. Taylor. I won't be but a minute."

As we turned into the highway I looked up at the house I had left. Aunt Eurania's cottage, white among its evergreens, the light from its windows of many panes shining on the snow, seemed to beckon to me. The whorls of smoke which scattered from the chimney to sail up into the sky indicated the warmth and cosiness inside the house. I longed to be back again, shut away from the world.

The Taylors made no effort to draw me into conversation but talked to each other as we rode along. It seemed that Phillipps Hutton, the artist, had presented a mural to the public school of Flanders, and the parent-teacher association was holding a special meeting tonight in honor of Mr. Hutton to express its appreciation of such a fine gift. Hearing, I recalled that last winter Mary Ellen the elder had written to tell me that the people of Flanders were rebuilding the Huttons' home. It had caught fire in the night, while the artist and his wife were in the city, and burned to the ground. The story went on to tell how carpenters were giving their labor, merchants were giving supplies, and others were contributing what money they could spare. Would I care to help? I had done so, gladly, and forgotten the gift.

WHEN WE REACHED THE SCHOOLHOUSE I kept close to Mr. and Mrs. Taylor and did my best not to feel out of place. The smell of oiled floors and chalk assailed my nostrils as we entered—reminiscent, nostalgic. The entire length of the main corridor was filled with tables gay with red and white covers. Bayberry candles burned brightly on every table. Many people were already seated.

On the wall above the largest table was the mural by Phillipps Hutton. The scene depicted was a familiar one. There was the country road that winds through Flanders and on down to Bulls Bridge. Wandering past red barns and farmhouses, it finally passes



the grist mill and the river and vanishes within the dim interior of the old covered bridge. Over field and mountain, river and valley, lay the soft brilliance of Indian summer. The artist had created a thing of rare beauty.

Mary Taylor was speaking. "We'd better find a place to sit down. Seems like I never saw so many people here before."

THE CORRIDOR WAS FILLING NOW. Mr. Bassett, the Congregational minister, came in with the Phillipps Huttons and Bronson Judd the sculptor. The hum of conversation filling the hall died away as the guests of honor were seated below the painting.

After Mr. Bassett, acting as chairman, called the meeting to order, a young girl who taught the third and fourth grades rose and read the minutes of the last meeting.

Mr. Bassett asked if there were new business to come before the meeting, whereupon the Ore Hill schoolteacher rose and said that her schoolhouse was in need of a new flag. Jim Taylor got to his feet and informed the chairman that this was a matter which should be brought to the attention of the school board rather than the parent-teacher association and that he, as a member of the board, felt that he could promise the teacher a new flag.

Mr. Bassett inquired for further business.

The school principal made the motion that any further business be carried over to the next meeting in order that we might get on with the rest of the meeting tonight. Doctor Blair, the physician, seconded the motion. Mr. Bassett declared the meeting adjourned, as far as the business part of it was concerned. Then he announced that Letitia Hayes, a student in the seventh grade, had been chosen to represent the grade school in an expression of gratitude to Mr. Hutton.

A DARK-EYED CHILD with a shy, sweet manner stood up. Her voice sounded as clear as a mountain stream.

"Mr. Hutton, the children in all the grades here in Flanders school thank you for the beautiful painting. When we leave school to go out into the world, the memory of your lovely mur—mural will remain with us forever."

The little girl sat down to great applause.

Next Mr. Bassett introduced the boy who was to represent the highschool.

The boy was big and clumsy. He had none of the grace of the little girl. But so in earnest was he, so plainly did the effort he was making show in his honest face, that the applause which followed his little speech was long and hearty.

Then Mr. Bassett, as president of the association, spoke in its behalf. He spoke well, with quiet sincerity, assuring the guests of honor of the deep esteem in which they were held by the parent-teacher associa-

tion, bringing them a tribute of praise from the adults of a grateful community.

WHEN THE MINISTER SAT DOWN there was a burst of applause, then silence. People were smiling and looking at the guest of honor.

Phillipps Hutton rose to his feet slowly. I gazed at the man with the thin boyish face, unruly hair greying at the temples. There was a suspicious brightness in the eyes of the artist. He cleared his throat and a hush fell upon us. The candle-light flickered gently.

"My friends," Phillipps Hutton's voice was low with emotion, "You have come here tonight to do me honor. I do not know how to answer you. Yet I would answer, for there is something I wish to say to you. If you will go north from Flanders for a mile and half you will come to a lane. If you will go up the lane you will come to a little house—a house built solely through the efforts and loving Christian kindness of the people of Flanders.

"Here on this wall"—the man gave a fleeting glance at the mural above his head—"inadequate as it may be, you will find as long as paint and canvas hold together, my answer of heartfelt gratitude to you all."

THERE WAS A TUMULT of applause, but I was scarcely conscious of it. Stirred, gladdened, with a lump in my throat I recalled my soliloquy of self-pity a few hours before, when I had wondered what I was going to find to do in the country, where I could go, with whom I could discover a congeniality of interests?

I looked with different eyes at the people around me. At Mrs. Canfield in her neat brown silk, her gentle smile beaming on everybody. At the rugged, kindly features of the carpenter, John Bacon. At the sensitive face of the artist, and the quiet pride on the face of the artist's wife. I was conscious of feeling very humble; it was a true humility that made me wonder what I could find in myself that would make me acceptable to these townspeople of Flanders.

Jim Taylor set down a tray of sandwiches and coffee before us. Other people were moving about getting their refreshments. The child Letty stopped beside our table with a box in her hand. She looked first at my neighbors and then at me.

"What is it, child?" asked Mary Taylor. "Oh, I know; it's the dues, isn't it?"

I was thankful for the purse I drew from my pocket. "How much are the dues?" I asked the child.

"Twenty-five cents."

"Twenty-five cents?" I echoed in astonishment.

"It's for a whole year," the child assured me. "I hope it's not too much," she amended shyly.

I dropped a quarter into the box and smiled at her. "No, Letty, it's not too much," I answered.

# Why School Boards?

By WALTER H. GAUMNITZ

**I**N ANY country public education is of primary concern to the people; in a democracy it is a matter of life and death. A democracy cannot survive unless the voters who control the government have sufficient education to vote intelligently. But more than that, if democracy is to succeed, the control of its schools must be kept by the people. In the United States the task of keeping the schools close to the people is entrusted to the hands of school boards. To become a school board member is to assume an important public duty.

Education is America's greatest single public undertaking; indeed, only five industries—agriculture, railroads, oil, electricity, and lumber—represent a capital investment more valuable than public school property. Each year the people of the United States spend two and a quarter billion dollars to provide instruction for their children. Thirty million young people, approximately a fourth of the total population, annually attend the schools.

To direct this vast educational undertaking the people have chosen nearly half a million school board members (directors, trustees), to serve on 127,000 school boards (far more school boards than are needed). Collectively, these school boards have the future of the Nation in their keeping. Not only are the responsibilities of the school board large in terms of numbers of children, teachers, and schools involved; the opportunities for service to the Nation are unlimited. For the most part school board members serve their schools without a salary; they regard it as a civic duty, a challenging service to democracy.

## What Is the School Board's Chief Task?

**W**HILE THE FINAL responsibility for providing and maintaining schools rests with the people, the res-

idents of a given community do not try to manage their schools themselves. Basic responsibilities for public education have been placed by the people, first, upon the several state governments. These governments have in turn fixed certain procedures for choosing representatives of the local districts to serve as school boards and have given to these boards the care of the local school property, the expenditure of current school funds, and certain other broad powers relating to the control of public education.

Since school board members are laymen who are not as a rule trained in what or how to teach children most effectively, and who know comparatively little about the details of school administration, their first and most important duty is to find and employ some person who is trained for this work and into whose hands they can confidently trust the multiplicity of duties involved in providing and maintaining good schools. If the task of employing an able and thoroughly trained school head has been well done, the duties of school boards become

**F**OR its radio project for 1938-1939 the National Congress of Parents and Teachers is cooperating with the United States Office of Education in presenting a series of broadcasts, "Wings for the Martins." This series, which will be heard weekly over the blue network of the National Broadcasting Company, 9:30-10:00 P. M., E. S. T., dramatizes the life and adventures of the interesting Martin family. Each month the *National Parent-Teacher* will present an interpretation of some of the problems presented in these broadcasts.

fairly simple. For the most part they need only to determine the broad policies under which they want their schools to operate and to see to it that the experts in charge carry these policies into effect honestly and efficiently. Naturally, when unusual situations arise, or when problems of far-reaching importance occur, the school boards must determine a course of action.

A school board, therefore, has a relationship to the schools similar to that of the board of directors to a hospital. They are the trustees, but they do not themselves do the technical work. They employ specialists to do this. No hospital board member would undertake to tell the doctors how or when they should perform an appendicitis operation or what ought to

be the diet of an anemic child; in the same manner no school board member will undertake to decide how or when a given school subject should be taught;

what textbooks and equipment should be used; or what should be done to solve the behavior problems of a given child.

## WHAT THE EFFICIENT SCHOOL BOARD DOES AND DOES NOT DO

### *The School Board Does*

1. It transacts its business in board meetings at a regular time and place.
2. It acts as a body or on authority of the board as a whole.
3. It employs the best superintendent, principal, or teacher it can get and dismisses him only for incompetence and similar causes.
4. After careful study of all the factors involved and upon advice of trained leadership it adopts rules and regulations to govern most of the important school situations.
5. A large portion of the board meeting is used to decide important questions of policy.
6. It sees to it that a carefully planned budget is made in advance and that other accepted business practices are instituted to care automatically and effectively for the purchase of services and supplies, as well as for most other problems of finance.
7. The superintendent or other person in charge of the schools nominates all employees and recommends dismissals; the board approves in most cases.
8. Problems of salary, tenure, promotions, leave, etc., are carefully studied and definite policies adopted.
9. It leaves the assignment of specific duties, the transfer and the supervision of employees, to the person administratively in charge of the school.
10. It supports the school head loyally in the performance of his duties. Disagreements on policy are taken up in board meeting and all the facts determined.
11. It requires adequate reports concerning business and financial matters, educational achievements, and the efficiency of employees.
12. It insists that all accounts be audited at regular intervals by certified accountants.
13. It studies its building needs in advance, acquires desirable sites, and adopts a sound policy for financing new school buildings.
14. It secures the services of experts in planning and building new school plants.
15. The board is careful to conform to the school laws fixed by the state.
16. The board makes every effort to determine the educational desires and needs of the people by holding hearings on important issues, inviting criticism, and the like.
17. The board keeps the public informed about its policies and makes frequent reports on school activities.
18. The school board is alert to better types of school organization and school administration. To serve the best interests of the people it will take steps to enlarge the district or to seek its own abandonment.

### *The School Board Does Not*

1. It does not consider official matters any-time, any-where.
2. It does not meddle in school affairs as individuals.
3. It does not employ in its schools almost anyone who has the proper license who can be secured at a low salary or who is a special friend of a board member or of other influential citizens.
4. It does not "run the schools" itself or attempt to solve its various problems on the basis of personal interests.
5. It does not use its time in approving bills, studying the catalogues, or wrangling over the best way to teach long division.
6. It does not attempt to conduct the business of the schools without a budget or to buy supplies in small quantities or upon the recommendations of high-pressure salesmen. It does not authorize separately each purchase to be made or each bill to be paid.
7. It does not investigate applications, make appointments, or dismiss employees without the assistance of the school superintendent or principal.
8. It does not play favorites or leave these matters to chance or personal interpretation.
9. The board, or its individual members, does not, as a rule, directly give instructions to the teachers and other employees of the schools.
10. It does not, out of board meetings, criticize or countermand the action of the school head. It does not undermine his effectiveness.
11. Few reports are required and the board pays little attention to the reports received.
12. It does not leave any doubt in the public mind concerning the honesty of school expenditures or the accuracy of school accounts.
13. It does not buy "left-over" sites, or connive with speculators in buying sites or in contracting for new structures; nor does it contract debts carelessly or without plans for liquidating the outstanding as well as the new obligations.
14. It does not itself plan new buildings or supervise their construction.
15. It does not ignore legal provisions or frequently get into legal difficulties.
16. It does not assume to "know best" in all matters or to adopt policies arbitrarily, or even contrary to the wishes of the public.
17. It does not deal with school affairs as if they were secret or their own private concern.
18. It does not let tradition or self-interest obscure its vision. If greater efficiency and better educational opportunities for boys and girls demand it the school board will not hesitate to recommend a new and better administrative organization even if the result is its own dissolution.

### Questions for Discussion

1. What are some of the most far-reaching problems which your school board has met and solved?
2. How does the procedure and conduct of your school board measure up when checked against the "dos" and "don'ts" suggested here for school board success?
3. Has your school board provided your schools with a trained and competent administrative and su-

pervisory staff? If not, are there insufficient funds for this purpose? Is the school board indifferent to this need? Have the people failed to realize the importance of trained leadership in the economical and effective management of their schools? Would a larger unit of school administration help to provide the necessary funds and make the employment of a trained staff more possible?



# Health in the Teens

By KATHLEEN WILKINSON WOOTTEN

**T**HIS is the last year of the fourth decade of the much heralded "Century of the Child." Perhaps it would not be amiss to stop for a brief summary of the "prideful progress" in America—three White House Conferences on Child Welfare and Child Health; research by psychologists, physiologists, and pediatricians; more child welfare and child health specialists; maternal and infant clinics; surveys and programs by Federal bureaus and departments; further development of maternal and child welfare divisions of state health departments and voluntary child health organizations; development of the so-called "progressive schools"; development of college and university courses in child care and child guidance; organization of parent study groups; growth of health programs for the preschool and elementary school groups; and a few health programs in high-schools.

## The Neglected Age

**T**O EVALUATE the results of all the above child welfare activities as expressed in the youth of today would be difficult. It would also be unfair without due consideration to the great social and economic changes that have come about so quickly in the twentieth century. However, so far as the health program is concerned the teen age is now the neglected age.

The highschool student's early life has been influenced by some of the above welfare programs, but little or nothing is being done for him during this critical period of rapid physical growth with its complex mental, emotional, social, and economic adjustments. Meantime, his whole daily life and future plans are being influenced by the complexities of a highly mechanized modern civilization, wherein luxury has softened reality, speed has conquered time and space, quantity rather than quality has become the standard, and *having* something rather than *being* someone has seemed to be the ultimate goal.

Certainly, no one can live, work, or play with modern youth without sensing their great lack of a feeling of security, or without respecting the strength and stability shown by many of them in meeting the complex problems and the temptations of modern life. Youth is fundamentally idealistic but, in spite of this, modern society has allowed conditions that have led to delinquency and criminality in both sexes, lowered the moral standards of many girls and young women,

fostered excessive fatigue that too frequently ends in physical and mental breakdown, and permitted sophisticated activities that have led to cynicism among thousands of youths. While there is no doubt that those who have kept their balance during the prosperous, exciting "twenties" and the anxious, depressing "thirties" are without doubt the strongest youths we have had in generations—and there are many of them—basic causes of the present youth problems should be studied.

Some of the underlying causes of the manifold individual problems of modern youth include: broken homes; prevalence in the modern home of mechanical devices, limiting the opportunity for normal expenditure of energy in family chores and permitting more leisure for activities outside the home; the compactness of modern housing, which offers little or no space for privacy; vicarious and artificial entertainment which discourages initiative and provides too much excitement and stimulation; lack of wholesome recreation; lack of discipline and moral training in the home and in the school; lack of religious training; lack of respect for law and order; lack of a sound education for living as well as for making a living; unstable economic life; fear of unemployment; and the too prevalent idea of getting something for nothing, the idea that "the world owes us something," that anything is all right "if you can get by with it"—the "hitch-hiker's thumb" point of view.

Fortunately, there have been some extracurricular programs such as Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Campfire Girls, Girl Reserves, 4-H Clubs, and Junior Safety Patrols, to help modern youth during the last two trying decades. It is now time for the home, school, and community to get together on a broad preventive and conservation program for American youth of all races, creeds, and strata of society. An adequate health education program in highschool would provide many practical opportunities to help in the solution of the youth problem because it has sound preventive aspects and it presents facts as they apply to life problems, thereby challenging youth to do something about them. Again, the highschool reaches more adolescents than any other program.

## Health Status of the Adolescent

**T**HE PERIOD of adolescence is a period of rapid physical growth and development, of intellectual maturity, and

rapidly developing social maturity. There is no well-defined beginning or ending of this period. Some say it begins at twelve and ends at twenty; others, that it begins at fourteen and ends at twenty-three. Some think only of the sexual development during adolescence, while others think of it as an abnormal period of stress, strain, and maladjustment to be lived through by youth and tolerated by adults.

If parents and teachers would accept the fact that the boy and girl from sixteen to eighteen has reached physical maturity and, if he or she has an average fourteen-year-old intelligence, can learn anything that a normal adult can learn, they would understand the adolescent's outward or inner rebellion against the authority of childhood years. Youth needs confidence. It craves recognition, independence (freedom), and equality. With a better understanding of adolescents, parents and teachers would avoid pitfalls in their relationship with them and give them the wise guidance needed. At the same time they would challenge youth with adult problems to be solved.

To the above recognition of the adolescent's inexperienced maturity, parents and teachers must add specific knowledge of the possible physical, mental, emotional, and social health needs of this period. Since the health of the whole personality is the final goal of the health program, a complete picture of the health status of the adolescent must include an inventory which covers each of its component parts and a fair understanding of the reaction of each on the other.

While death rates in this group are the lowest in the whole life span and the percentage of morbidity

and minor ailments is also lower than in other groups, mortality from tuberculosis has not declined in this age group as it has in other age groups. Since tuberculosis can be prevented and cured, this fact alone shows that there is a great need for better ways of living among modern youth.

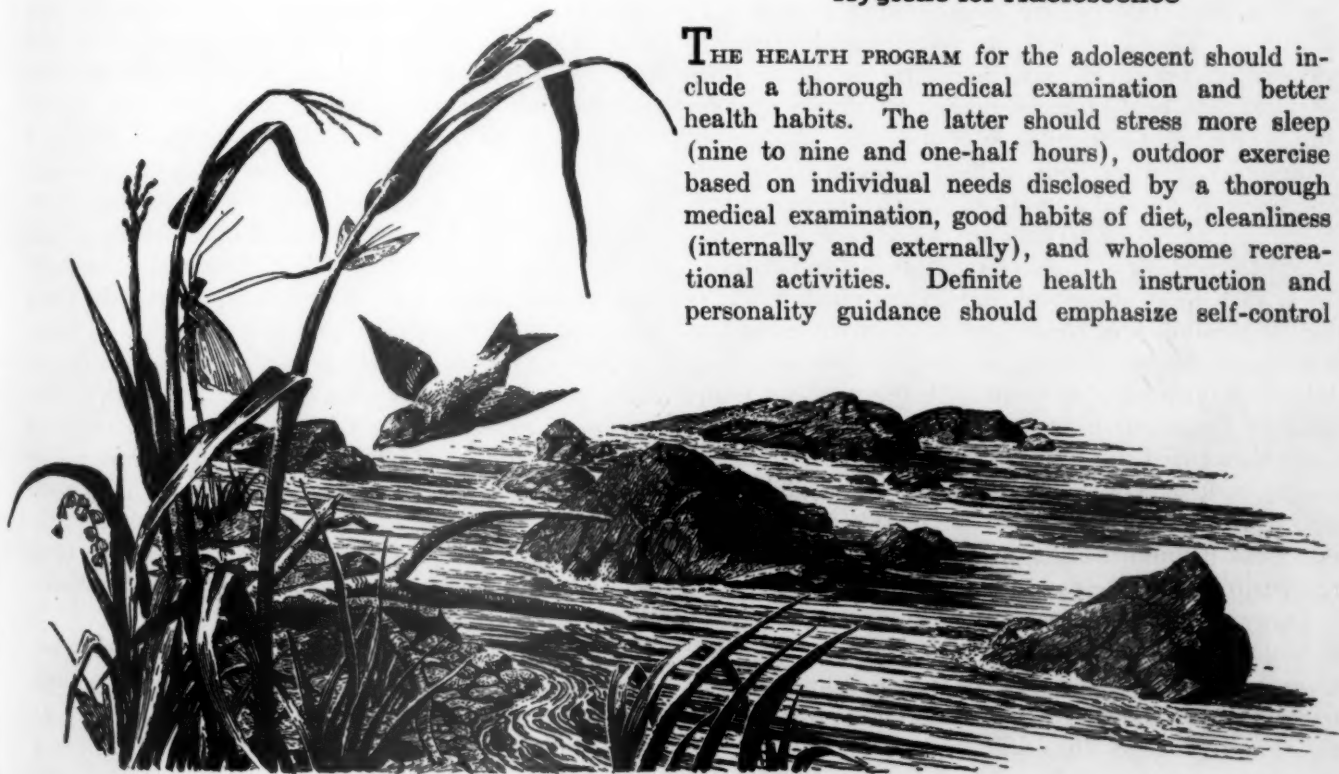
The physical picture of the adolescent presents the maturing of the reproductive system plus outstanding physical development. Physical growth may be surprisingly sudden, with rapid increase in strength. This may be associated with awkwardness, poor posture, stuttering, ties, fatigue. It may result in tremendous increase in the boy's appetite or loss of appetite, "finickiness" or special cravings for sweet or sour foods in the girl; in indigestion, constipation, acne or similar skin disorders; in increase in diseases of the lungs and heart; in abnormal thyroid; in malnutrition and in defects of hearing and vision.

There are many conditions allowed in an effort to help youth that also need careful evaluation. For example, boy and girl athletes today are overdoing, while their grandstand audiences need to find activities suited to their individual needs. Both groups need to develop wholesome individual hobbies that will "carry over" in after life.

The mental and emotional picture is apt to be strongly influenced by the adolescent's physical condition. Self-consciousness, a feeling of inferiority, irritability, sensitiveness, sullenness, and so-called "laziness" or hyperactivity are not uncommon. Naturally, serious lack of control and maladjustments may follow if wise guidance is not available from dependable adults.

### Hygiene for Adolescence

THE HEALTH PROGRAM for the adolescent should include a thorough medical examination and better health habits. The latter should stress more sleep (nine to nine and one-half hours), outdoor exercise based on individual needs disclosed by a thorough medical examination, good habits of diet, cleanliness (internally and externally), and wholesome recreational activities. Definite health instruction and personality guidance should emphasize self-control





and self-direction that will lead to sound health, poise, and personal responsibility for self and others. It should also encourage wiser choice of a career and lead to vocational independence.

Students like the right kind of health instruction. They wish the practical results that may be achieved from it. This has been clearly shown by their enthusiastic cooperation with a good program and by their careful checking of questionnaires. In fact, they frequently ask for help with their health and personality problems, and resent neglect of this preparation for life.

Health education is as broad as life itself, for it includes not only the physical, mental, emotional, and social problems of the student but all his human relationships also—personal, family, community, national, and world wide. This inclusiveness of health education makes intelligent cooperation of certain people necessary. The secondary health education program depends upon the cooperation of the school administration, health service personnel (school doctors, nurses and various assisting specialists, health instructors and teachers of related subjects), parents, and students. The health education program should include: healthful school living; adequate health service; definite health instruction under guidance of adequately trained health teachers; extracurricular activities; cooperation of related departments, such as science, home economics, physical education; understanding cooperation on the part of the home.

### Parental Responsibility for Health Education

IN THE LAST ANALYSIS parents in a democratic country, mothers and fathers, are responsible for their own children. Therefore they are directly and indirectly responsible for these four things: the health of their children; the healthfulness of their children's schools; the health and personality as well as the scholarship, philosophy, and methods of their children's teachers; the place, kind, and amount of their children's extracurricular activities. There are many parents who attempt to meet all of these responsibilities and do meet them in a most successful and happy manner. It is the responsibility of these parents to increase the less privileged parents' ability to accept their responsibility. As one who has dealt with the personal problems of thousands of young people over a period of more than two decades the writer is constantly amazed at the lack of a sense of responsibility exhibited by many parents of the so-called privileged groups. Parents need definite training in order to meet the health responsibility of their children.

Many health problems either are directly social or economic problems, or have social or economic implications. These must be met as such. While no one begrudges the underprivileged child an opportunity to all those privileges that will lead to an "unfettered

start and a fair chance in the race of life," America must awake to the fact that all responsibility cannot be taken from the home and that home still remain a responsible home, any more than everything can be given "free" to a child during school when he will be projected immediately after school life into a world in which he is supposed to pay for everything, without his entering the adult world with the all-too-prevalent "gimme" attitude of today. Somewhere along the way a balance must be achieved.

### Special Problems in Health Education

AT PRESENT there are several factors that stand in the way of a sound and complete health education program. They are these: inadequately trained health teachers; lack of interest or inertia on the part of the highschool administration and staff; the pressing demand for academic achievement, especially the passing of college entrance examinations; lack of family and community appreciation of health education; the departmentalized school with its too independent units; the heavy scholastic programs and distracting social activities of the average highschool student.

The first and most important problem to be solved in health education is the choosing of adequately trained health teachers. The National College Hygiene Conference has set up high standards on the college level for personality, knowledge, and skill for this most difficult teaching assignment. Similar requirements for health teachers in the highschool should be set up.

While the correlation of health with science, home economics, physical education, and other related subjects is important to the health program, research has shown that in those highschools where health is taught only as a correlated subject the results are unsatisfactory both in reaching the individual health problems of the students and in giving them adequate knowledge of the subject. It is still recommended that a school health committee be composed of the principal, representatives from the health service departments, heads of related departments, the chairman of the health committee of the P.T.A., homeroom teachers, and related student representatives. But this whole program must be advised and guided by a health coordinator or counselor who is the teacher of health and who sees the value of all phases of the work. This counselor must also be responsible for the teaching or supervision of special courses in health suited to the different grades of highschool. This is being done in some few schools in America today with remarkable results in helping students to find and solve their own personal health problems and also their citizenship and vocational problems.

Principals and superintendents must learn that not any good teacher of another subject—Latin, perhaps, or mathematics—or even of such related subjects as science, home economics, or physical education, is a



wise choice for this highly specialized and difficult task of health instruction in the highschools, unless the individual has special training. The health coordinator or health instructor for highschool must have a broad and sound scientific knowledge of physical, mental, emotional, and racial health, with all of the specialized content that is employed. He must have an enthusiasm for health and an appreciation of the importance of each phase of the program, as well as skill in teaching, interest in and understanding of youth, and a wholesome, attractive personality.

A good health instructor will always remember that health education is an applied science and as such is an endless but fascinating field of study; that it is an activity program based on sound study of scientific facts as they apply to daily life. To quote Dr. Ray Lyman Wilbur:

We are grasping the fact that education is not a mere transfer of information from one mind to another, but that it is a manifold process by which a growing person learns how to operate

under his own power and will. Particularly in the sphere of health we must learn by doing, and what we do must be done with understanding.

Parents must see that the American school system, with its huge million-dollar city plants and its big, consolidated rural plants, both of which are invariably overcrowded and staffed by overworked and underpaid teachers, has become a mass production mechanism which is not achieving the results that should be expected. They should take time to study those systems of education which offer excellent programs for development of the individual according to his particular ability for his own specific place in a sound democratic society. They should also see that sound school health education programs worked out to meet the personal needs of individual students in a specific situation will lead them to adventure in individual, school, and community service.

Students of health education should find that their study of health leads to personal, home, and community problem solving that will add zest and success to life.



# Guiding Principles



**THIS** is the seventh of a series of discussions which will interpret basic principles and fundamental policies for parent-teacher associations as adopted by the National Congress of Parents and Teachers. The Vice-presidents of the National Congress will contribute the articles in this series. It is hoped that through the practical application of these principles the local association will find help in achieving the purposes and aims for which the parent-teacher association exists.

## The "Noncommercial" Policy of the P.T.A.

**T**HE UNDERSTANDING of the guiding principle which relates to the "noncommercial" policy of the Congress parent-teacher associations is of particular importance today. The why of its importance and the how of the entanglements which may result are discussed in this article. The presentation owes much of its refreshing style and content to the fact that it expresses the convictions of a parent-teacher husband and father.

**T**HE "noncommercial" policy of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers is perhaps the source of more grief to leaders of local units than all the other mustn't-dos in the bylaws.

It is the present-day equivalent of the tempting apple offered Snow White—often as discreetly tendered, and with practically the same result for the unit which takes a "bite." For this reason, it is important for local presidents to gird their organizations against its attacks.

Every earnest parent-teacher worker realizes the need for money in the work of child welfare to which he or she is dedicated. Raising the necessary funds

for

## PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATIONS

isn't always easy. This is where the commercial tempter makes his entrance.

The president is told that the organization can secure adequate funds for carrying on its year's activities simply by permitting Whosis, Incorporated to finance the annual Year Book for the unit—with only a teeny-weeny little advertising hidden somewhere among the pages, or tucked innocently between the covers. The tempter even offers to take upon itself the expense of delivering the pamphlets. "Just turn over the list of members to us, and we'll do the rest," is the seemingly magnanimous offer.

If the president is new in that position and very eager to push forward the child welfare program in the community, it is very likely that the fleshpots will prove alluring. Even veteran P.T.A. workers feel that the opportunity has much to recommend it, and may nibble at the bait in the same spirit as those of us restricted to diet weaken before the temptation to lick the spoon in the ice cream freezer.

"But what possible harm is there in permitting Blank's Laundry to help us just this month?" the sorely-tempted ask. "After all, Mrs. Blank works in the P.T.A., and the family is really interested in promoting child welfare in the community."

Granted that the Blanks have the best intentions in the world, the local sets a precedent which, sooner or later, will turn out a Frankenstein of endless obligations. For when the Me-too's learn that the P.T.A. has "sponsored" Blank's Laundry, Mrs. Me-too, who works side by side with Mrs. Blank in the local, immediately speaks her little piece for the Me-too washing machines. And the local unit sinks a little deeper into the quicksand of the limitless commercial field.

When made aware of danger, the president immediately turns on the red light, but the danger sign doesn't work now. If Blank's and Me-too's are given special privileges, and Smith's or Jones's turned down on the identical proposition made by Blank's and Me-too's, there is evidence of politics, and the child welfare program suffers as a consequence. This surmise isn't hearsay or vivid imagination; it's history.

The only safe course to take is a firm no-can-do whenever a commercial offer is made. Such a course, strictly observed, builds respect for the unit, and sustained respect moves as many and as hefty mountains as its more widely publicized contemporary, faith.

"How may we recognize the commercially tinged proposition when it comes in the guise of an 'interested citizen'?" is a familiar question.

The "interested citizen" who is really interested will not put strings on his offer. He will make his donation quietly and without remarking casually that "you might mention the White Sale that Whatsit's is having. Lots of bargains there for the home, you know. Your members will want to take advantage of 'em."

**T**HERE ARE NUMBERLESS CASES on record where the commercial scheme is so cleverly disguised that only a person with the instinct of a G-man—or a very suspicious "old hand"—is able to distinguish the real from the commercial. Since few of us are born with detective abilities, a good old-fashioned suspicion is heartily recommended. Turn the offer inside out, hold it to the light of reason, examine its texture, wash it to see if it runs. Subject it to the same crucial tests you make when buying expensive fabrics or rare jewels, or the baby's food. Then turn it down.

Some years ago a big department store made a local P.T.A. a generous offer. Be it said to the credit of the manager of that store, the offer was made in good faith, for he didn't know the "noncommercial" policy of the organization.

The president admired the apple. She felt of it, and it seemed as firm as it was rosy. Its flavor must be excellent, she reasoned, for it looks good on the outside. Times are lean, and our children need so many things. Maybe just this one time—just while the depression is with us. Her board agreed, and the deal was on. This, mind you, in a community noted for its well-informed parent-teacher members! But let's get on with the story.

The store published a page-sized ad the next day, stating that a percentage of every sale made on the following day would be given to the local P.T.A. for its child welfare activities in the community. P.T.A. local officials would act as department managers, and the friends of each were requested to "buy from your favorite manager."

The scheme worked, in spite of a downpour of rain. At the end of the day the local received a generous check as its part of the sales—but on the heels of the reward came rebukes from more experienced parent-teacher people for violation of the Congress' "noncommercial" policy. A rival establishment had presented the same proposition to another local a few years before, and had known of the "noncommercial" policy from that time forward. It lost no time in reporting the favor bestowed by the P.T.A. upon the other store.

**I**T'S A RARE DAY when some president of some local isn't approached by a well-meaning commercial concern with some brilliant proposition which is guaranteed to finance the organization's welfare work for a "little easy, pleasant cooperation." Sometimes the

big-hearted commercial concern offers to sponsor the local unit's radio appearance. "Put on any kind of program you want," the concern will say. "Between your acts, the announcer can just mention that this concern is your sponsor. No harm in that, certainly."

The president—unless a veteran leader, wise in the ways of commercial concerns—admits that it needs a clear day and an almost utter lack of faith in one's fellow man to discover a flaw here. The budget is heavy, the children's needs are numerous. The radio program would not only offer an effective means of publicity; its benefits to the unit would be threefold—a cash consideration, a publicity program, and a chance for the children to appear on the program. That last would please the school principal, too.

So, the show goes on. A very good show, perhaps, with a very acceptable check "to buy necessities for the children." The president's friends call her up, and congratulate her. The parents of the children are delighted that Susie and Harry were "on the radio last Monday." Only the National Congress—and the jealous old rival of kind Mr. Commercial Concern—are disturbed by anything in the whole scheme.

**M**AYBE THE COMMUNITY is unusually active—and so, progressive. The organization prints and distributes a monthly bulletin—oh, not one of those mimeographed sheets, but a really-truly printed pamphlet, with ads 'n' everything in it.

One of the advertisers has political leanings. He sets out to be a governor, or senator, or congressman. Or perhaps he just wants to be the next mayor of this fair city.

His manager looks about for good media through which to tell the world of the candidate's qualifications for the post to which he aspires. He picks up a copy of the P.T.A. council bulletin. "How many members has this unit?" he inquires idly. About six hundred or a thousand, he is told. Let's see, now: six hundred members—probably all women, most of 'em mothers. Each woman with a husband—maybe a son or daughter of voting age. But let's be conservative and not gamble on the progeny. That's still twelve hundred good able-bodied voters right there, not counting a possible stray maiden aunt or incapacitated great-uncle who's "hipped on politics"—to say nothing of numberless neighbors and friends.

So, when the ad solicitor for the bulletin turns in her copy for the next issue, there are ohs and ahs as a whole page contract stares the unit in the face. "It's one of our supporters running for office. He's always helped finance our bulletin, which, in turn, helped feed our children and buy clothing and shoes and things for 'em. This is just reciprocity on our part, using his ad—besides, look what he's paid for a whole page!" Thus the uninformed group is likely to reason.

But there's a veteran in their midst, with the scars of burns received in similar cases of former times. When she steps into the picture with the burned thumb



turned neatly down on the page ad, she may be about as popular as a lean and hungry cat at a convention of fat little mice. But she's not a veteran for nothing. She remembers those burns, and is determined that the new president shall be spared their pain.

"The proposition looks genuine," she smiles, "but it's not only contrary to the 'nonpolitical' policy of the parent-teacher association; it violates also the 'noncommercial' policy. Sorry, but we can't take the ad—nor the money, badly as we may need it."

**B**UT LET'S ASSUME, for the sake of example, that the full-page ad was accepted. And let's follow through to the inevitable result.

The advertiser-candidate naturally has an opponent in his race for office. The other man is a pillar in the community, a power, and well qualified—perhaps better so than the page-ad candidate. His wife may be a P.T.A. worker. His daughter may teach in the school in which the local functions. All concerned are humiliated, even angry, when they see the ad. Their friends and relatives are displeased. The advertiser-candidate has presented his message under apparent P.T.A. sponsorship, and the P.T.A. is injured in the community. The child welfare program is seriously impaired, and the careful work of many months or years is undermined. Even the advertiser fails to benefit, for he has aroused the enmity of his opponent's circle of acquaintances.

Two ambitious citizens collaborate in presenting an amateur play, intended for schools, or for school audiences in the community. With the endorsement of the P.T.A. the play will be well attended. The proposition runs something like this: "We'll hire the hall, and pay all expenses. You merely mention it at your meeting, or put up a notice in your school, so that members and their families may know the place, date, and time. You receive a percentage of the 'take' for your child welfare fund. One of your finance chairmen stands at the door and helps take admissions."

Looks innocent, doesn't it? But dig a little deeper. Yes, the program does say something about Brown's furniture in the typical home; and the announcer makes some sort of speech about the P.T.A. members preferring to shop at Brown's for their wants. But that doesn't mean anything. Nobody pays any attention to these plugs between acts. So reason the show's promoters.

The wise P.T.A. will have none of it, thank you. That commercial angle is poison to a forward-looking, active P.T.A. with a good many useful years ahead of it in the community, if it builds up community interest and community goodwill, and steers clear of entangling alliances.

**T**HE THRIFT CLUBS in schools offered the commercial-minded in the community what looked like a perfect alibi.

"So you're going to teach the youngsters the habit of thrift?" a suave banker remarks to the local P.T.A. head. "Well, now, that's fine, really. Very fine. You'll need a lot of bank books, of course—and check books, perhaps. My bank will be happy to furnish these, Mrs. P.T.A., and to assist your organization in promoting a splendid habit."

Mrs. P.T.A. talks it over with her group, and they decide to accept the books. "The children will feel the importance of the movement when they see the bank's name on the books, just like the ones their parents use at home," the banker remarks. Oh, so that's it is it? Well, let's just get along with some of our own for the present, the informed leader will tell the board. That is, unless the bank agrees to leave its name off and donate the books as a cooperative—not a commercial—gesture. After all, the bank across the street is a part of the community, and just as much entitled to the goodwill of the P.T.A. The children, therefore, are taught that the habit of thrift is a worthy one; but they choose their own bank, without help from the printed message about the safety of the institution donating the books.

**T**WO RIVAL THEATRE CHAINS operate in the same community. Chain A offers a local P.T.A. the "opportunity" to have its underprivileged children witness a Saturday matinee "entirely without cost to you." The P.T.A. is furnished with "free" tickets—on which is the chain's most colorful advertising. Each ticket when sold to an adult automatically admits a child, and at the same time, each P.T.A. worker who sells the tickets automatically becomes an agent for Chain A pictures. By lending its influence, the P.T.A. engenders the ill-will of Chain B, and damages the welfare program for which it is responsible in the community.

Many mail order firms are old offenders—often with the full intention of rendering a community service as well as securing a profitable prospect list. Offers from them are remarkable only for their similar phrasing and amazing frankness. The opening tackle runs something like this:

"It must require a lot of money to feed and care for the needy children in a community the size of this. And the people hereabouts do not seem the kind who patronize school benefits any too liberally. How would you like to receive enough cash to finance your entire year's program, without a lady in your organization having to lift a finger—other than to punch a type-writer key, or push a pencil. Give us a list of your members, and the money is yours!" The amount, to make refusal doubly difficult, is usually generous. But so is the plump worm on the business end of a fishing pole.

The wise old fish may flirt with the idea. But if she is *very* wise, she lifts an eyebrow, and passes it by.

—OLA H. MAILHES

# Books In Review



**SONG OF YEARS.** By *Bess Streeter Aldrich*. D. Appleton-Century Co., New York. 1939. 490 pages. \$2.50.

**SONG OF YEARS** is the story of a family—Jeremiah and Sarah Martin, their two sons, and their seven daughters.

It is also the story of the settling of Red Cedar Valley and the growth of the very new Iowa of which it was a part. It begins in 1854 with only a handful of settlers in a neighborhood and closes eleven years later at the marriage of Suzanne, the youngest of the Martins, just after the assassination of Lincoln. It is a story of pioneer hardships, of the national scene as it appeared to these frontier men and women, of laughter and hoopskirts, gallant makeshift and Civil War anxieties. And it is a love story.

But it is, primarily, the chronicle of a family, from quiet Henry whose courtship with Lucy consists only of one walk to the spring for water, to idealistic Suzanne who can love no one but stalwart Wayne Lockwood in a neighboring cabin. It is a study of relationships within a large family and the effect of interacting personalities.

Who has not known Melinda and Celia, each determined to get ahead of the other, even after they are married and mothers? Who has not known Henry, keeping his own thoughts and purposes within himself? Is it because everyone else talks so much they have given him little opportunity to overcome his quietness? Who has not known Emily, Ma's right-hand man, looking wistfully at life yet destined by her very usefulness to stay with the folks? It can be very easy in a large family to let Emily do it, to accept Emily for the dependable sister she is without giving her a hand in return.

Jeremiah is an excellent father, a man of community, state, and national spirit, a man large in the affairs of his group. From him his children learn to "pull on through" their difficulties—there's a "fresh start tomorrow."

Sarah scolds, yes, but following her around a bit one can sympathize. She must marshal her seven noisy, lively daughters through the round of pioneer householding, from soap-making to feeding as many guests as Pa may have happened to invite to dinner. She is proud of her husband, equal to any emergency of ill-

ness or need of child and grandchild, and she can carry on at home for the weeks and months that Jeremiah is away, beyond Iowa mud and rigorous winter, on political excursions, as a legislator in Des Moines, on errands for the state. Yes, one can understand Sarah's sharp retorts. And I do wish Jeremiah had got around to building the loft stairway she wanted so very much.

—ELEANOR SALTZMAN

**LIFE AND GROWTH.** By *Alice V. Keliher*. D. Appleton-Century Co., New York. 1938. 245 pages. \$1.20.

**THIS BOOK** is one of a series prepared under the supervision of the Commission on Human Relations of the Progressive Education Association. The announced purpose of the series is to help young people with their personal and social problems. It appears to be the mission of this particular volume to free boys and girls of highschool or junior college age from (a) needless anxieties about their physical and personality characteristics and the relation of these to their social adjustments, (b) customs and taboos which interfere with free thinking and with social change, and (c) worries and errors which result from lack of understanding of facts relating to sex.

If such are indeed the author's objectives, her work is well done. The introductory chapter, buttressed by later facts and illustrations, explains the complexity of personality, disposes of the notion that any particular type is the "normal," and proves that individuals of diverse physical and mental types may be useful and admirable. These observations should set at rest the uneasy minds of many who fret about the question of their normality.

The author then questions the concept of normality with respect to social behavior; shows that behavior which is "right" at one time or in one place may be "wrong" at another time or place; points to the fact that customs often linger on after their usefulness has ceased and that both the education of individuals and



the progress of society are often impeded because superstitions, prejudices, or outworn beliefs stand in the way. The reader is put on guard against those who seek to perpetuate old beliefs because they have selfish interests in preventing change. It is made clear that tradition frequently obstructs progress, and that consequently the clear-eyed youth should be critical of old beliefs, traditions, shibboleths.

Few social thinkers would question the soundness of this counsel so far as it goes, though many, even among the most progressive of them, would add a qualifying note to the effect that an idea is not necessarily bad simply because it is old. Admitting the validity and timeliness of the warning against paralyzing taboos and traditions they would still insist that the presumption in every case is against the innovator and in favor of tradition until it is upset by convincing evidence. Miss Keliher seems to have in mind lethargic young people, and is forgetful of the impetuous. The book is good medicine for the countless numbers of young people who are tradition-bound, but it supplies no warning signals to the smaller but not inconsiderable number who are heedless of convention and contemptuous of standards sanctioned by the experience of centuries.

In the chapters dealing with sex, biological facts with which young people should be familiar are treated with clarity, tact, and good sense. The information which is imparted should relieve boys and girls of many needless anxieties, and should appease natural curiosity which, if unrelieved by knowledge, might become morbid.

There is much that is indisputably sensible and helpful to youth in this book; it is reasonable in tone and, for the most part, sound in its underlying philosophy. It is a good book.

—WALTER E. MYER

"TEEM"—A TREASURE-HUNTER. By Rudyard Kipling. With frontispiece by Marguerite Kirmse. Doubleday, Doran and Co., New York. 46 pages. \$1.00.

KIPLING'S LAST PIECE OF PROSE writing is a dog story. And it is a treasure to be welcomed by parents and teachers, a very fine and wholly individual tale. From the point of view of philosophy, as that must interest all who have to do with children, *Teem* has two sound merits which in combination are perhaps rare: it is a really doggy dog story; and its basic theme is of simple natural importance to dogs and children and grownups alike. From the standpoint of literary entertainment—plot, characterization, emotion, style—it is utterly delightful. And *Teem* is as true and lovable a hero as has come our way for many a long day.

He lives for his Art, in hard work and pride and happiness. He hunts truffles among the little thin oaks where they grow best, in the south of France. He has the great, the incommunicable gift of the Nose. The

good dogs of the château labor over the cart and observe life and explain the significance of the curious round white Pieces and Thin Papers which their masters value so greatly and which, they say, "not only truffles but all other things turn into at last." But *Teem's* ardent young hero worship goes to a fellow Artist, the masterful dog that drives the cattle, and with him he talks of the most important things of life. "Outside his Art," his wise friend warns him, "an Artist must never dream." He is a busy and contented little dog. And then, suddenly, he is taken away.

Yet this is by no means a weepy story, nor is it sentimentalized. *Teem* is homesick for his lost world. But little dogs can adapt themselves to new lands, bring their old skills to the interpretation of new smells, find new interests, even new devotions. *Teem's* Nose tells him of the charcoal burner's kindness, and he loves the charcoal burner and knows him as his Bone. His instinct feels the Fear that lies over the sick girl. When a huge She dog rushes upon him with growling menace he remembers not only the importance of tact but the advice of his wise old friend, "At crises, it is best to go forward." He makes friends with the She and calls her his Aunt. But he has no Art any longer, and for that he is truly wretched. Moreover, he has no collar, and for that he goes in peril of Monsieur The-Law. How he finds his Art again, how through it he lifts the Fear from the cottage, how he gets a collar and makes a new world and serves his Art and his new Bone worthily—this is the story, and an original, eventful, and entrancing story it is.

It is worthy of note, too, that this book is quite unlike "Thy Servant a Dog," save in the author's mastery. That engaging tale which Kipling wrote a few years before this was less completely doggy in its motivations and reactions; and its amusing individual style was entirely different from *Teem's* almost austere purity of self-expression. Here is something of the gravity of the animals at the jungle's Council Rock; and a convincing and irresistible earnestness is joined with a charming wit.

*Teem* is, in other words, a realistic as well as a delightful dog story, a story of suspense and incident on a solid foundation of understanding and thought. The only time I ever met Rudyard Kipling we talked of almost nothing but dogs. It was the year before his death. He was on his way back to England after a winter on the Côte d'Azur, and had stopped off briefly at Aix-en-Provence, where I was living. "Shake hands with Mr. Kipling," I said to my Scotty, after we had chatted a bit; and my Scotty never budged. I repeated the order, and Mr. Kipling smiled. "If I know Scotties, he won't," he said. And sure enough, he didn't. Rudyard Kipling knew Scotties. He knew all dogs. He knew—to repeat—their philosophy. That philosophy is enshrined forever, with tenderness and humor and beauty, in the last prose he ever wrote. And its human value is inescapable.

—KATHERINE WOODS



# The Family in a Democracy

## PARENT-TEACHER STUDY COURSE

IN AN attempt to meet the needs of our day, the *National Parent-Teacher* presents as its Parent-Teacher Study Course for 1938-39, "The Family in a Democracy," outlined and directed by Dr. Ada Hart Arlitt, Chairman of the Committee on Parent Education for the National Congress of Parents and Teachers. The course is based on eight articles which appear monthly, September to April, in the *National Parent-Teacher* magazine.

### Projects and Purposes

By ANNA H. HAYES  
(See Page 13)

#### I. Pertinent Points

1. Since no organization can weigh values more fairly, the parent-teacher association should play its part in deciding which values and which ideals are most basic in our society.
2. Since the parent-teacher associations throughout the country have contact with parents of children of all ages, from birth through college, they have a heavy responsibility for determining the standards set by society.
3. "Every community in a democracy deserves citizens willing to serve its needs and able to recognize the need for service." (See article by Mrs. Hayes.)

#### II. Questions to Promote Discussion

1. How far are parent-teacher associations responsible for setting standards in a community?
2. How can every member of the community be made to feel his responsibility for making a society which will be in line with our highest ideals?
3. How can the best leadership be developed in a community?
4. What are some ways in which modern communities can be improved?

### STUDY COURSE ARTICLES

#### Previous Articles

NEW STANDARDS FOR FAMILY LIVING  
THE CHANGED HOMEMAKER  
THE CITIZEN IN THE NURSERY  
THE CITIZEN GOES TO SCHOOL  
SOON WE'LL VOTE  
WHOSE QUARRELS ARE THESE?

#### The Forward Stretch (April)

MANY OF THE CONDITIONS that we are now facing have been met before in the world. Economists and sociologists can sometimes predict from present conditions what may follow. A few of these predictions are contained in this article.

# Our Contributors

**D**R. JOSEPH K. FOLSOM was born in Westchester County, New York, and spent most of his early life in Newark, New Jersey. Dr. Folsom has taught economics and sociology at the University of Pittsburgh, Dartmouth, and Sweet Briar, and is today professor of sociology at Vassar College. He is the author of *Culture and Social Progress* and *The Family: Its Sociology and Social Psychiatry*; also editor of the symposium book *Plan for Marriage*, written by faculty members at Vassar.

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A native of Louisville, Kentucky, KATHARINE WHITESIDE TAYLOR began her professional career as a social worker in New York City. Since then her work has included serving as consultant in human relations and conducting seminars for parents, teachers, and leaders of various agencies. Dr. Taylor—who is the mother of three children, now aged eight, thirteen, and sixteen—has recently written a book with an arresting title, *Do Adolescents Need Parents?* It is interesting to note that at one time Dr. Taylor was a specialist in parent education with the Denver Tuberculosis Society, whose program was carried on through the Denver Council of Parents and Teachers.

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Well known for her long and distinguished work as a community leader, ANNA H. HAYES is, as parent-teacher readers know, first vicepresident of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers. Besides her many civic duties, Mrs. Hayes finds time to write both prose and poetry which has brought her literary recognition. She is a member of the Pen Women's Club.

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This is the second appearance in our magazine of ROBERT P. TRISTRAM COFFIN, who is probably best known for his books of poems, one of which, *Strange Holiness*, won the 1936 Pulitzer prize for poetry. His prose includes essays, biographies, and novels. The descendant of a long line of New Englanders, Dr. Coffin's enthusiasm for New England and especially for Maine, his native state, is revealed in all his writings.

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GERTRUDE CHITTENDEN, a graduate of the University of Nebraska, is on the staff of the Child Development Department at Iowa State College, teaching

two-year-olds in the nursery school and giving college courses in child care. Miss Chittenden is a member of many organizations, among them the Association for Childhood Education and the National Association for Nursery Education. She says, "I am enthusiastic about my work," a fact substantiated by her understanding of young people and their problems.

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This month we present another New Englander, ALICE HOPSON NISBET, who lives in the Berkshire foothills of Connecticut. Mrs. Nisbet, a mother of a thirteen-year-old son, says that close association with country people is responsible for her opinion that a mountain village is one of the nicest places in which to live. Mrs. Nisbet is well known in New England for her literary work.

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Author, lecturer, and teacher of health, KATHLEEN WILKINSON WOOTTEN is a pioneer in school health education, having developed one of the first tested health courses for all grades in elementary and secondary schools. She is founder and director of one of the oldest and best known college health departments in America, at Georgia State College for Women.

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DR. WALTER E. MYER, director of the Civic Education Service, KATHERINE WOODS, a book review editor of the *New York Times*, and ELEANOR SALTZMAN, well-known Iowa writer, contribute this month's book reviews. Mrs. LAWRENCE A. MAILHES, a vicepresident of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers, presents the seventh article of our series on the Guiding Principles for parent-teacher associations.

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"Why School Boards?" was prepared by DR. WALTER H. GAUMNITZ, senior specialist in rural education problems, U. S. Department of the Interior, Office of Education.

